

PLAYSTATION 4

PLUS



ISSUE NO 240
CRYSTAL CLEAR

25

THINGS YOU DIDN'T
KNOW YOUR PS4
COULD DO

PS4'S KILLER EXCLUSIVES

The blockbuster games only
possible on PlayStation

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

LIGHTNING RETURNS FINAL FANTASY XIII

Is this the face of the JRPG's last hope?

LATEST PREVIEWS

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ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV
SHADOW OF MORDOR
METAL GEAR SOLID V
THE EVIL WITHIN
LEGO THE HOBBIT
STARBOUND & MORE

THE TRUTH ABOUT 4K

A New Year's resolution
we won't be keeping

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ISSUE 240

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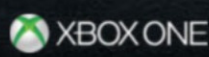
The city is my mask

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PS4 PS3 PSVita PSN Welcome **PLAY**

The UK's only independent PlayStation magazine

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

PS4 OR BUST



SONY HAS GONE nuts recently with PlayStation Plus. While PS4 might not be getting big name retail games like PS3 and Vita do, the trend of new releases being

free at launch is amazing – *Resogun* still gets a lot of play, *Contrast* was alright for a freebie, *Don't Starve* continues to kick my ass and I plan on playing the hell out of *Outlast* this month. And with *The Binding Of Isaac* coming down the line and *DriveClub* likely to be the game that opens the floodgates for big games to join the indies, it's only going to get better.

Outside of the few indie titles that have trickled through since launch, it's been pretty slow. It's always the way with any new console launch to be fair, but there's so much good stuff in that launch pool that you shouldn't have run out of PS4 goodness just yet. It's starting to pick up now though, with *Thief* and *inFamous* just around the corner and even more big games following soon after. And that's what you want to know about, right? The biggest games coming to PS4? And those games that you simply can't play anywhere else? You've come to the right place, friend.

This issue, we've gone big on all the massive exclusives heading to PS4 this year – the games that no other console could handle and that will show off the true power of PS4. It's going to be a great year, and that holds true whether you've embraced the new generation or not – awesome cover game *Lightning Returns* and last issue's featured title *Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2* are among those games proving that there's life in the PS3 yet, plus Remote Play and PlayStation Now will make Vita more essential than ever.

Whatever your platform of choice, you've got a cracking year of PlayStation gaming ahead of you – provided you're capable of turning pages and reading, you're about to find out exactly why.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see you online...

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LUKE ALBIGÉS

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CURRENTLY PLAYING

Don't Starve

PLAY⁴ Contents

Let us show you what your PS4 can really do...

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PS4 EXCLUSIVES

Meet the games no other console could handle

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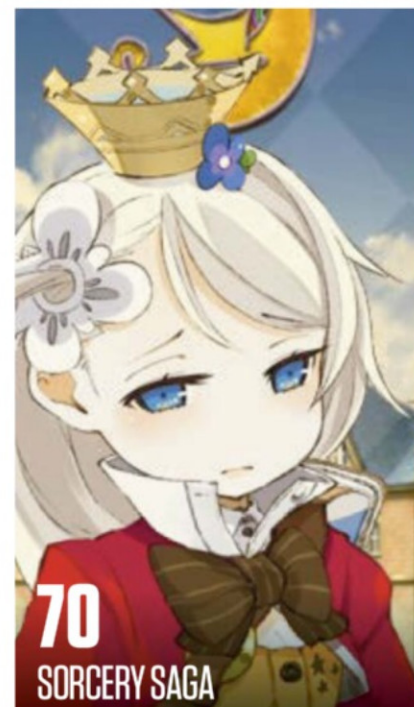


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First look – resurrection or game over, man?



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LIGHTNING RETURNS

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MASTER MINECRAFT

Never mind the blocks

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PS4

THE ONLY PLACE TO PLAY

Sony has always excelled when it comes to exclusives, securing great third-party games and producing amazing in-house content from incredible games such as *Naughty Dog*. With a new focus on bringing indie games to PS4, Sony supporters have more reasons to be happy than ever before. Yes, some of these games are also on PC, but if you lean more towards consoles, these are the titles you can only play via the power of PlayStation...

GUILTY GEAR XRD -SIGN-

ONE OF OUR most anticipated games here on **Play**, the absurdly beautiful *Guilty Gear Xrd* is only coming to PS4 and PS3 (and arcades of course, but good luck finding one these days). It's been ten years since we last saw a brand new *Guilty Gear* game – too long! Yes, it's finally back, and it's glorious. *Xrd* makes the transition from 2D sprites to 3D models, but you'd be forgiven for not even realising. This the best use of cel-shading and 2D-style models we've ever seen.

We bloody love fighting games, and we aren't looking forward to a single one right now more than *Guilty Gear Xrd*. Just in case you ain't sold yet: Daisuke Ishiwatari is back, not only in charge of the series he created once more but also composing the soundtrack. Let's rock!



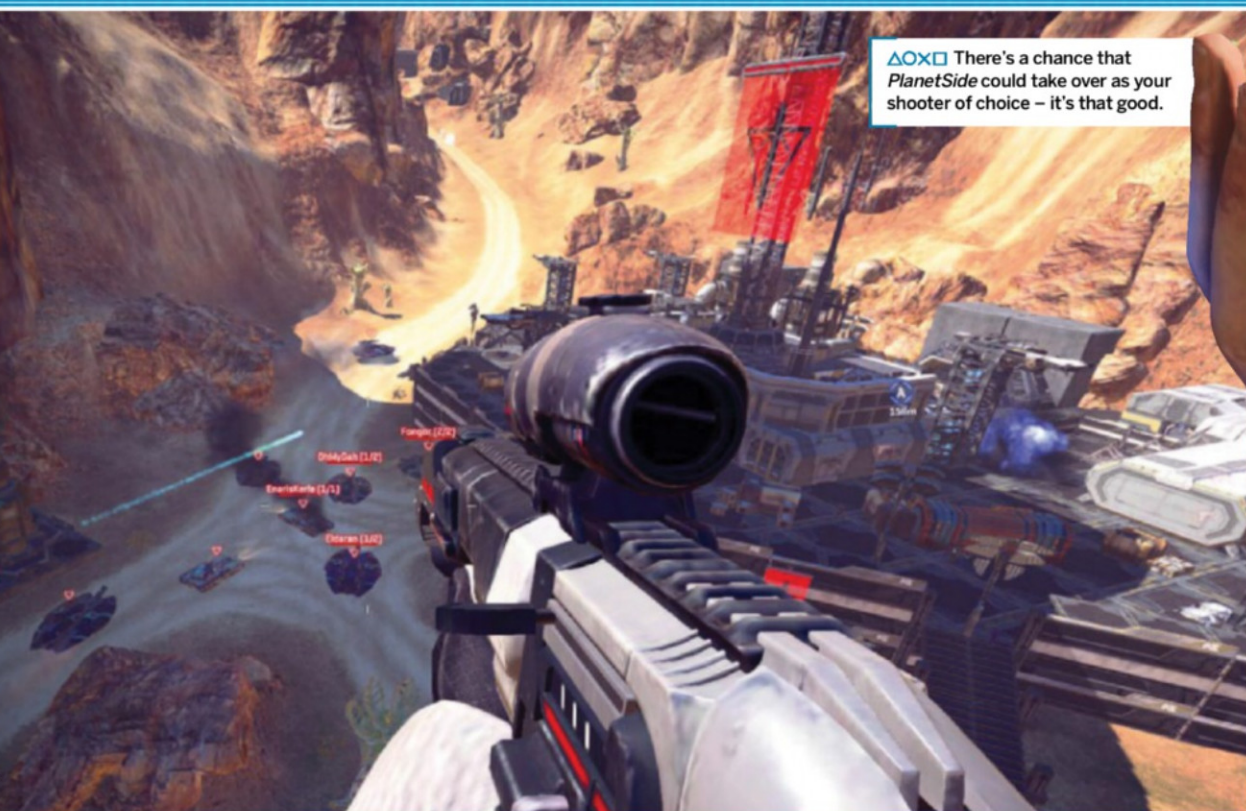
△×□ The first time we watched the trailer and the 2D graphics panned out to reveal 3D models was a moment we won't soon forget. Wow.

PLANETSIDE 2

ANOTHER MMO FROM Sony, although one of a drastically different genre to *DC Universe Online*. *PlanetSide 2* is an FPS on a massive scale, pitting thousands of players against each other across various battlefields in a single, enormous war. It's already been out on PC for over a year, giving that lot plenty of time to test it, iron out the bugs and add new content.

PlanetSide 2 is totally free-to-play and, in our experience, far better than the other F2P FPS on PS4 right now, *Blacklight Retribution*. Again, unless you have the wonga to splash on a decent PC, PS4 is your best bet and the only real option for many.

It's a cracking game, in some ways reminiscent of a sci-fi *Battlefield*, with multiple player classes, drivable vehicles and huge maps full of points to capture and defend. People like FPS games, people like free stuff, and the rest writes itself. *PlanetSide 2* is going to be a big deal on PS4.



△×□ There's a chance that *PlanetSide* could take over as your shooter of choice – it's that good.



INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

INFAMOUS IS A series that has always been of a consistent high quality, getting good responses but never quite becoming a big deal – a solid mid-carder rather than the main event. This could all change with *inFamous: Second Son*, the first game in the series that's really being pushed by Sony – a must-have open world adventure that really showcases the power of PS4.

That said, not a huge amount has changed in regards to the core gameplay. Players still control a superpowered individual, the stupidly-named Delsin Rowe this time around, and are free to run, jump and fly around a massive open city – this time, Seattle.

Set seven years after *inFamous 2*, superpowered humans, known as Conduits, have become feared and vilified by society, with a special police force, the Department of Unionised Protection, created to combat them. Delsin, not a fan of authority at the best of times, comes in contact with a Conduit, awakening his own latent powers. Suddenly he's a wanted man, but Delsin isn't exactly the type to turn himself in.

Second Son seems to be stepping up the game for the series: while gameplay follows the same basic template, everything is bigger and better. Seattle looks stunning, and at least some of the environment will be destructible – an impressive feat that we've seen in some of the footage released so far.

Delsin isn't limited to one set of powers, although he'll start with just his smoke-based abilities. He'll be able to absorb the powers of other Conduits – the only one we've seen so far is a set of speed-based neon powers but it's not unlikely that the classic electric powers will make a return in some form.

There's not much longer to wait now for what could turn out to be the first definitive next-gen sandbox game. If you've got a PS4, you simply have to at least give *Second Son* a try.

△×□ While we're still not sold on new hero Delsin Rowe, at least his powers are badass.

"AN OPEN WORLD
ADVENTURE THAT
REALLY SHOWCASES
THE POWER OF PS4"

DRIVECLUB

BEING DELAYED MIGHT have been a blessing in disguise for *Driveclub*. Through development it's seemed like a promising but unremarkable racer, most noticeable for being the game PS Plus subscribers would get for free at the console's launch. But, as we all now know, it was pulled at the 11th hour and replaced with *Contrast*.

It sucks for people who were looking forward to the game, but delays rarely make a game worse. We had the chance to play *Driveclub* last summer, and it was a functional but flavourless racing game. It worked, but there was nothing to set it apart, the social challenges no different from what *Need For Speed* has done.

What *Driveclub* needed was a bit of polish and an injection of personality, and thanks to a bit of extra time in the womb, that should hopefully be what it gets. The social stuff is exciting, as although we've seen the same kind of thing before, *Driveclub* seems to be taking it further and integrating it better. Spontaneous challenges pop up as you race, from beating a friend's average speed on a straight to scoring more points on a powerslide round a corner. It's also pushing the idea of the club, players forming racing clans and grouping up to take down other gangs. It's a neat idea.

Driveclub is still going to be free on Playstation Plus when it launches, although the free version will be something of a taster, missing some cars and tracks of the full game (this has always been the plan, don't blame the delay). As long as it doesn't get swept up in the deluge of fantastic late March/early April releases, *Driveclub* has a big chance of being a success among eager PS4 owners.



EVERQUEST NEXT

SEEING AS EVERQUEST is owned by Sony, it's a pretty safe bet that it's always going to be a PC/PlayStation exclusive franchise. *EverQuest Next* looks genuinely revolutionary in the MMO genre, one which has grown slightly stagnant since *World Of Warcraft* destroyed all competition a decade ago.

MMOs on console are gradually becoming more viable, with *DC Universe Online* proving it can be done. Although the PC is *EverQuest Next*'s first port of call, it is coming to PS4 at some point after, and it's clear that this has had an effect on the game's design. Characters have a few key abilities on hand at any one time, much more suitable for a controller than the typical hotbar full of stuff that essentially requires a keyboard.

With an emphasis on player creation and a fully destructible and rebuildable environment, *EQ Next* seems to be taking as much inspiration from *Minecraft* as it is its RPG predecessors. The game will require a purchase, but after that will be free-to-play.



△×□ MMOs have needed a kick up the arse since *WoW* killed all competition. *EverQuest Next* might just be the proverbial boot...



△×□ Driveclub looks lovely, and PS Plus subscribers will be getting a condensed version for free on release.

“DRIVECLUB IS STILL GOING TO BE FREE ON PLAYSTATION PLUS WHEN IT LAUNCHES”

FINAL FANTASY XIV: A REALM REBORN

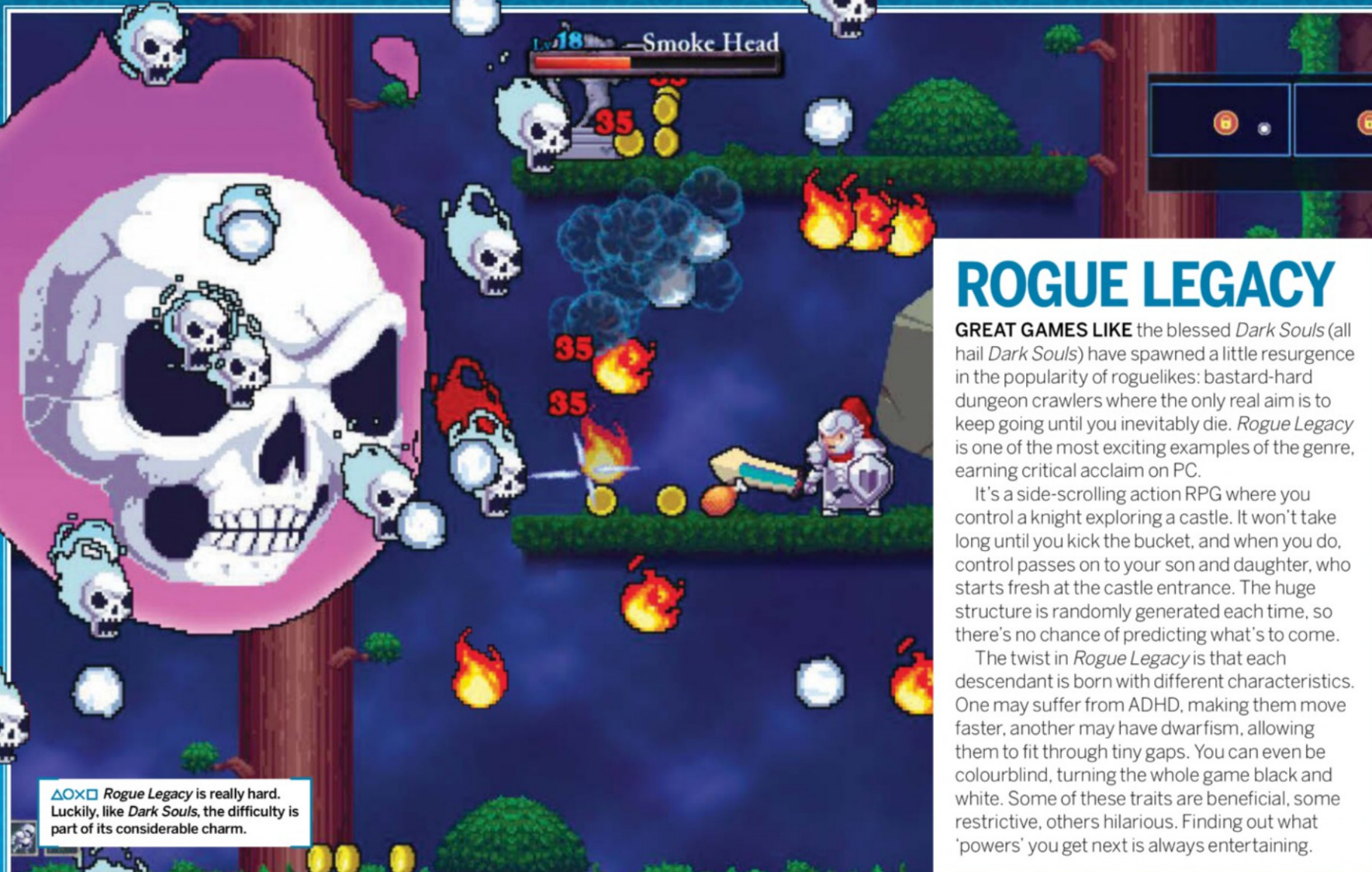
THE MMOS JUST keep on coming, and this time it's the surprisingly enjoyable second version of the really crap original, *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*. You may remember the utter debacle that was the first version of *FFXIV*. Broken, buggy, boring and bland, it was a huge disappointment, especially to fans of the great *Final Fantasy XI*, the first *FF* MMO.

To be fair to Square, it took pretty drastic measures, shutting down *FFXIV* and effectively remaking it from the very start. The result is essentially a completely new game, and a really entertaining one at that.

You might have played *A Realm Reborn* on PS3 already, but the PS4 version, slated to release in April, will be much closer to the PC version in terms of graphical quality. Otherwise, it's the same great game, and one that MMO fans need to try out. The only downside is the subscription, an irritation in the world of free-to-play. That said, it's worth the money.



△×□ Every RPG should give the option to be a song-slinging dandy. Weapons and armour? Please.



ROGUE LEGACY

GREAT GAMES LIKE the blessed *Dark Souls* (all hail *Dark Souls*) have spawned a little resurgence in the popularity of roguelikes: bastard-hard dungeon crawlers where the only real aim is to keep going until you inevitably die. *Rogue Legacy* is one of the most exciting examples of the genre, earning critical acclaim on PC.

It's a side-scrolling action RPG where you control a knight exploring a castle. It won't take long until you kick the bucket, and when you do, control passes on to your son and daughter, who starts fresh at the castle entrance. The huge structure is randomly generated each time, so there's no chance of predicting what's to come.

The twist in *Rogue Legacy* is that each descendant is born with different characteristics. One may suffer from ADHD, making them move faster, another may have dwarfism, allowing them to fit through tiny gaps. You can even be colourblind, turning the whole game black and white. Some of these traits are beneficial, some restrictive, others hilarious. Finding out what 'powers' you get next is always entertaining.

△×□ *Rogue Legacy* is really hard. Luckily, like *Dark Souls*, the difficulty is part of its considerable charm.

SOMA

IF YOU'VE BEEN a console-only gamer you might not have played *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, a PC-only release. If you have, you'll know it as one of the best horror games of all time, a first-person adventure with no combat. If you know there is something nearby, your only option is to hide and try and sneak past, creating some absurdly tense moments.

Developer Frictional Games is back doing what it does best: a first-person horror game! This time it's sci-fi, set on the remote research facility PATHOS-2. All we know about the story is that it involves strange machines, possibly discovered outside the station, that begin to take on human characteristics. Intriguing...

SOMA will mark the first time Frictional comes to console, and being the swell dev that it is, it has chosen PS4 – and only PS4 – as a platform alongside the PC version. We are big horror buffs here on **Play**, and we've been desensitised enough that it takes a lot to scare us. So believe us when we say that *Amnesia* was terrifying, and believe us when we say that *SOMA* is going to be absolutely horrific... but in a good way.

△×□ Ugh. Time to change the 'days without an accident counter' back to zero again, we suppose...

"SOMA IS GOING TO BE ABSOLUTELY HORRIFIC... BUT IN A GOOD WAY"

“THE CAMERA PAUSES AT
MADAGASCAR AND ILE SAINTE-
MARIE, STOPS ON THE TRAVEL
ROUTE OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE”



UNCHARTED

WHEN MOST PEOPLE think of PlayStation exclusives, they think of Naughty Dog. From the early days of *Crash Bandicoot*, through *Jak And Daxter*, *Uncharted* and the bloody brilliant *The Last Of Us*, that badly behaved canine just keeps on pumping out amazing PlayStation exclusives. It seems that the team has at least one more *Uncharted* game in it, with a new PS4 entry in the series announced in a teaser last year.

There was no gameplay, no Nathan Drake – heck, no clues to whether it’s another action-adventure game or a kart racer! There are a few things we do know. The trailer features a voice over by actor Todd Stashwick, who will play a character in the game – as he hasn’t been in the series before, almost definitely a new one. The map shown in the video is an ancient depiction of the African continent. As the camera pans over the map, it pauses at Madagascar and Ile Sainte-Marie, stops on the travel route of Sir Francis Drake. A Latin sentence is written next to a drawing of a skull: ‘Hodie Mecum Eris In Paradiso’, a quote from Luke 23:43 which translates to ‘Today you will be with me in paradise’.

That’s it: the rest is speculation. We can’t see Naughty Dog getting rid of Nathan Drake in favour of a new character, but we wonder if there will be more to this game than a sequel. Perhaps we’ve hopped forward in time, and an old bitter Drake ends up on an adventure with his distant son, the two gradually bonding over shared experiences. Actually, wait – that was the new *Indy* film and it was shit. Do something else please, Naughty Dog.



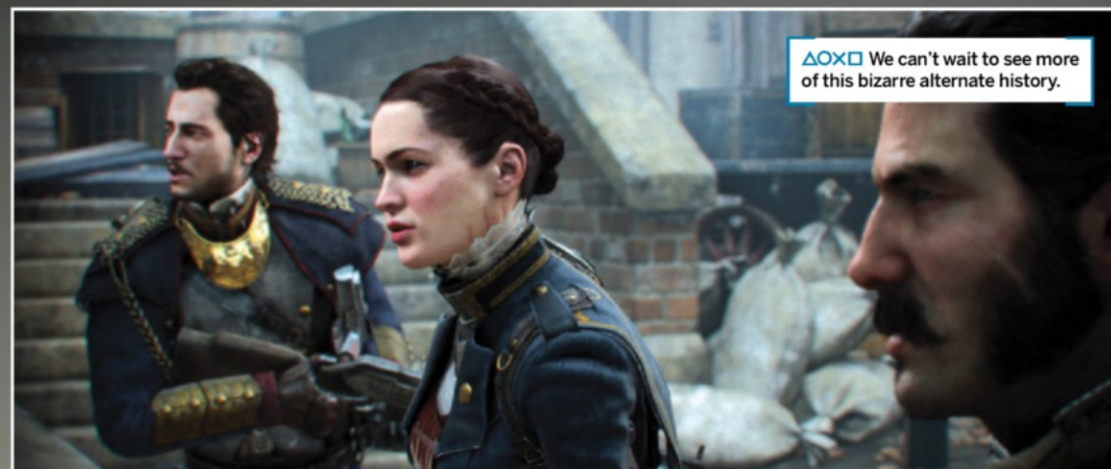
△×□ Yes, we know this is old artwork. This page would look pretty dull with just a big brown map on it, though...

THE ORDER: 1886

READY AT DAWN'S new IP is one of the most interesting exclusives on our radar. This is the team responsible for the two great *God Of War* games on PSP, and we can't wait to see what it can do on a bigger, way more powerful machine.

The Order is set in 1886 (duh) in an alternate version of London, vastly different from the one historians recall. Hundreds of years before the game takes place, a group of people genetically mutated, taking on bestial traits and being dubbed 'half-breeds'. The two breeds engaged in a war that raged for centuries, until King Arthur brought together the Knights of the Round Table to try and find a way to save humanity. Arthur and his Order discovered a substance known as 'black water', giving longer life and recovery from injuries at the cost of humanity.

Fast-forward a few more centuries and the half-breeds are winning the war, until the industrial revolution once again gives humans the advantage. This isn't the revolution we were



△OX□ We can't wait to see more of this bizarre alternate history.

taught about in school, however; airships, wireless communication, thermal imaging and weapons that fire clouds of thermite and bolts of lightning are developed. As the game begins, the war seems to be reaching its final stages, but a rebellion among the poor underclass threatens to tear the humans apart from within.

Gameplay seems to follow the third-person shooter formula, with the player moving from cover to cover, firing shots from a semi-auto pistol before getting close and smashing the enemy with the butt of the gun. Otherwise, we still haven't seen much of the gameplay of *The Order*, and it's still a ways off, coming in Q3 2014 at the earliest.

"THIS ISN'T THE INDUSTRIAL
REVOLUTION WE WERE
TAUGHT ABOUT IN SCHOOL"



△OX□ Check out that smog!
Yes sir, it's definitely London.



ΔΟΧΔ Spinoff idea: a game featuring Octodad's evil twin – Octobad.

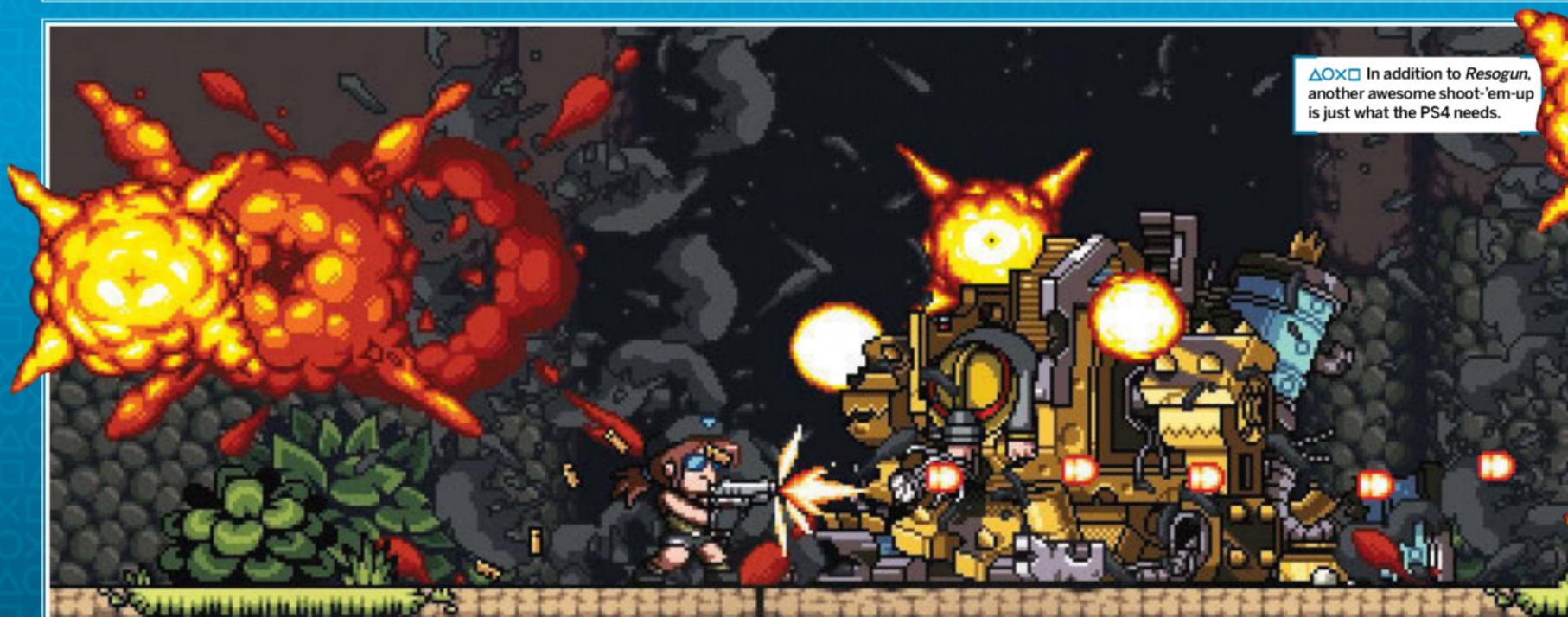
OCTODAD: DADLIEST CATCH

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, the game that will redefine the medium, end forever the argument as to whether or not games are art, unite the world in peaceful harmony and create an end to suffering everywhere: it's *Octodad*!

In case you've missed our gushing about *Octodad* in previous issues, it's a game about an octopus pretending to be a human so his (human) wife and kids don't figure it out and leave his ass. Unfortunately, being an octopus, he hasn't got any bones. This makes movement quite difficult, to say the least.

Players control Octodad's limbs directly, and the results are hilarious. Our intrepid hero flops about like jelly given sentience, destroying everything in his path with his wildly flailing limbs. Sure, the game's only got one gag, but it's a really funny one. *Dadliest Catch* is one of those games that is just as much fun to watch as it is to play, and it's going to make the PS4 the must-have console across the globe. Well, maybe.

ΔΟΧΔ In addition to *Resogun*, another awesome shoot-'em-up is just what the PS4 needs.



MERCENARY KINGS

WE GREW UP on games like *Metal Slug*, so you can be damn sure we are excited for *Mercenary Kings*. A game from the dudes behind *Scott Pilgrim Vs The World: The Game*, it's a side-scrolling shoot-'em-up just like momma used to make.

Run about, shoot enemies and rescue hostages: that's pretty much all there is to it, and that's all we want. Players can craft weapons and armour to upgrade their arsenal, and four-player co-op works both locally and online.

An early-access version of the game is available on Steam right now, eager players essentially helping develop the game by testing it as they play. The real thing is expected early 2014 – sooner would be better than later, guys, if you are reading – as soon as they iron out the kinks. There's a story in there someone about the evil forces of CLAW and a top-secret laboratory base on a tropical island, but honestly? We just want to blast a bunch of dudes with massive guns.

HUNTING GROUND

The game takes place on the space station Sevastopol, which apparently houses information about Amanda's missing mother (you might have heard of her).

PLANETSIDE

Most Alien games seem to visit at least one planet that has been mysteriously wiped out. Usually, believe it or not, by aliens. When will you people learn?

SPACE IS THE PLACE

We imagine you'll also be taking some trips outside the Sevastopol, potentially in some zero-gravity sections. They seem to be all the rage these days.

ETA Q4 2014

DEV CREATIVE ASSEMBLY

PUB SEGA

TWITTER @ALIENISOLATION

Alien: Isolation

Like mother, like daughter



ALSO COMING
TO PS3

WHEN WAS THE last good *Alien* game? By our account, it was *Aliens Versus Predator 2* on PC, way back in 2001. It's been 13 years and we've had plenty of *Alien* games since, ranging from disappointing to outright terrible – the recent *Aliens: Colonial Marines* being a shining and particularly stinky example.

The problem is that none of these games have managed to capture the true feeling of the films, be it the isolation and paranoia of the first or the madness and panic of the second. Some haven't even tried, others have but have failed miserably – hello again, *Colonial Marines*.

Most games look to the second film for inspiration: lots of guns, lots of aliens, action, action and more action. That's fine, and we'd love a good *Aliens* game one day, but what we'd love more is a game that captures the helpless terror of the original. Enter Creative Assembly.

Yep, the small team in West Sussex best known for making *Total War* games on PC is making a first-person survival horror *Alien* game. Initially, *Isolation* seems to be the antithesis of everything *Colonial*

Marines was: tense, dark and slow-paced, focussed on running and hiding rather than combat, only one Xenomorph instead of hordes to gun down without pausing for thought.

That's right: there's only one alien in *Isolation*, and we couldn't be happier. These Giger-designed monstrosities should be near-invulnerable killing machines, inciting terror at a mere glance, but when you can blast away a bunch without trouble, the fear disappears. Even better, the Xenomorph on your tail is *bloody massive*, and when you catch a peek of it, you best get to running.

Everything is seen through the eyes of the daughter of Ellen Ripley, Amanda, in a story set 15 years after the first film. Fans will know that at this point in time, Ripley is floating through space in cryostasis where she will remain undiscovered for another 40 years or so. Amanda, after growing up never knowing what became of her mother, finally receives a lead that draws her to the decommissioned space station Sevastopol. But guess what? There's an alien on board.

Going by what we've seen, *Isolation* is *Amnesia* in space: a first-person horror game where your

△○×□ Ladies and gentlemen, one of the best monster designs of all time. Giger's alien still looks phenomenal, 35 years on.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ At long last... could this be the *Alien* game that we've always wanted?

□ Just you and a nine-foot Xenomorph, all alone. Something's got to give.

× An emphasis on running and hiding rather than combat.

○ It looks and sounds just like the 1979 original, which is great news.

"THERE'S ONLY ONE ALIEN IN ISOLATION; WE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER"

offensive options are either minimal or non-existent. In the small section we've seen, Amanda has no way of combating the Xenomorph, her only option being to run, hide and hope. Cowering in a locker as the menace draws nearer, her motion tracker beeps with rising frequency as the alien paces toward her. Why doesn't the alien hear the motion tracker? Because the beeps actually come through Ripley's headset, we're told. As Amanda's breathing becomes ragged and panicked, holding down L2 causes her to hold her breath as Mr Morph sniffs about outside. As the screen starts fading red and Amanda is in danger of passing out, the alien finally leaves and the player can finally release the button as Ripley draws a gasping breath of relief. It's the exact kind of thing we've been wanting in an *Alien* game for years: tense, slow-paced (in a good way) and oppressively terrifying.

The big question is whether the game can maintain the tension and scares without becoming

familiar. In *Amnesia*, the scariest moments are the opening few hours, before you actually encounter a monster. Once you've been caught and died a few times the terror wears off, because you are now familiar with the worst that can happen. If Creative Assembly can avoid this trap and keep finding new ways to assault, attack, threaten and scare the player, the only limit is its imagination.

The whole thing looks the part, capturing the feel of the 1979 film with padded furniture, corridors of steel grating, lurid green LCD displays and of course, the classic handheld motion tracker. CA has access to over three terabytes of source material from the film courtesy of Fox, including the original sound effects and soundtrack. New material has been recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra to add to the classic score and create a soundtrack that dynamically changes to match whatever is happening on-screen.

Inventory and crafting systems are promised, and will help the player be slightly more proactive in tackling the menace stalking them. That said, facing the alien head-on will still be suicidal, and as it will learn your tactics from each encounter, new methods of self-defence must be employed to remain effective. Deodorant can flamethrower, anyone?

Alien: Isolation sounds amazing, the *Alien* game of our dreams that we've been waiting on for years. Unfortunately, years of disappointment have made it almost impossible for us to get excited for an *Alien* game for fear of the inevitable crushing of hopes and dreams upon release.

Still, this is a studio with proven success, a fresh take on an old classic and, most importantly, the right ideas of what the people really want. More than anything, we truly do want this game to be really sodding great. Do us proud, Creative Assembly.

Sam Smith

ALIEN: ISOLATION is being developed by Creative Assembly. Check the website for more details: www.alienisolation.com

△OX□ The xenomorph on your tail in *Isolation* is a massive, nine-foot tall killing machine. Fly, you fools!

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Finally, a REAL Alien game, true to the atmosphere of the first movie!
@Rowdy_One

past alien titles have been poor but im hoping that this will be the turning point in the series
@adamnarain0511

Don't care. They messed up the last one.
Paul Jones

It's a shame the game is gonna be underrated and over looked due to Gearbox. I'm holding out to make my own judgment **Chris Homfray**

I am really excited. Forget aliens. If they can bring back the scare factor then it'll work. **Callum Thomson**



PLAY VIDEO

Watch the trailer on our YouTube channel or your free disc, with team commentary.

YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

BLAST FROM THE PAST

ALIEN TRILOGY

Remember this one? For many PlayStation gamers, this would have been their first *Alien* game, and perhaps their first FPS too. It's alright, but doesn't hold up that well today.



△OX□ Your victims for this evening. Amanda is the one with her arms crossed in a sassy pose.

ETA 20 MARCH | DEV KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS | PUB KONAMI | TWITTER @HIDEO_KOJIMA_EN

Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes

What is Kojima's secret? Nanomachines, son!



EVERY MONTH BRINGS us that bit closer. We now have a release date for the first part of *Metal Gear Solid V*, hitting our shores both digitally and physically on 20 March.

As you may well know by now, *Ground Zeroes* is a prologue of sorts to the 'main' *Metal Gear Solid V*, *The Phantom Pain*. It begins in 1975, a few months after the events of *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker*. If you haven't played *Peace Walker*, we'd recommend it. Unlike previous PSP game *Portable Ops*, *Peace Walker* is both crucial to the story and really, really good – arguably one of the best MGS games to date. Thanks to the awesome HD version now available on PS3, you've got no excuses. Get to work!

Big Boss/Snake is still leader of Militaires Sans Frontieres, a mercenary group without a home nation. His mission this time around is to infiltrate an American black site in Cuba and find and rescue his young comrade, Chico Libre. At the same time, Snake is instructed to search for Cipher agent Paz, apparently still alive after their last fight. It's safe to say, if you haven't been keeping up with the series, in particular *Peace Walker*, you might be a bit lost going into *Ground Zeroes*.

Kojima's reasoning for splitting MGSV into two parts is to help ease people into what he claims is a radical new take on his franchise. "There will be a significant difference in what *The Phantom Pain* brings to the series," Kojima has said, "so we want to ease players into the new open-world environment and its potential." Cynics may wonder if trying to

money. That said, it's a new *Metal Gear Solid* – we all know we are going to buy it regardless.

Ground Zeroes also looks to take a lot of gameplay inspiration from *Peace Walker*. Movement and CQC are similar, with Snake still able to take out multiple enemy soldiers in quick succession when up close and personal. One gameplay addition we aren't too fond of is the ability to quickly snap targeting to a soldier as they spot you, but we've been assured this can be turned off for people who like their games tough. Targeting enemies with the scope, which allows you to see them at all times in a style similar to *Far Cry 3*, can also be turned off. Don't worry: if you want your old-school, hardcore *Metal Gear* experience, you can still get it here.

Base-building will also return, allowing players to develop weapons and items from their mother base while they are out on missions. Kojima has spoken of a full day and night cycle that runs in real-time,

as well as allowing players to tackle missions in the order they choose, rather than running through them in a fixed order. It's unclear how much of this will apply to *Ground Zeroes* and how much will only be seen in *The Phantom Pain*, but we know for sure that GZ will feature extra 'Outer Ops' missions besides the main task.

The jury is still out on whether *Ground Zeroes* is a full game in its own right or a quick cash-grab by Konami. When you remember that people bought *Zone Of The Enders* just to play the included *Metal Gear Solid 2* demo, perhaps it's not surprising that Konami may take the same approach once more. Still, for now all we know is that it looks damn fine, and we are extremely excited.

Sam Smith

METAL GEAR SOLID V: GROUND ZEROES is in development at Kojima Productions. Check the website for more details: metalgearsolid.com

"GROUND ZEROES TAKES A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM PEACE WALKER"

squeeze some more money out of consumers might be more of a real reason, though.

Indeed, some see *Ground Zeroes* as little more than an attempt to cash in on excitement, getting gamers eager for a new MGS game to part with some money for what may essentially be a demo. A price of £19.99 on PS3 and £29.99 on PS4 isn't easing matters, and many are concerned.

Of course, at the moment we just don't know. We don't know how long *Ground Zeroes* will be, we don't know how many side-missions it will include, we ultimately don't yet know if it will offer value for



PLAYING FAVOURITES

Everyone gets a prize!

Ground Zeroes is launching on PS3, PS4, Xbox 360 and Xbox One. Kojima doesn't want anyone to feel unloved, so both Sony and Microsoft fans will get an exclusive mission for their version.

Us Sony lot will get 'Déjà Vu', a recreation of sorts of the original *Metal Gear Solid*, with players controlling classic Solid Snake in all his blocky glory. The mission seems to follow the basic outline of the original game using all the new graphics and gameplay that *Ground Zeroes* brings to the party.

Meanwhile, Xbox owners get 'Jamais Vu', which sees alien body snatchers taking over the military base in Cuba (yep). Every human on-site is infested, so Snake and co turn to the only man who can save them – cyborg Raiden from the future. He doesn't have a human body to snatch, after all.

We wouldn't worry too much if you want to play both of them. We'd bet good money that, eventually, whichever mission isn't available on your console is released as paid DLC down the line.



△×□ There's trouble afoot! Expect all the drama, all the intrigue and all the nanomachines that the series has become renowned for.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ An introduction to the mechanics and narrative of *The Phantom Pain*.
- The return of *Peace Walker* elements such as base-building and recruitment.
- × The promise of a catastrophic event at the end of the game to set up *The Phantom Pain*.
- Plenty of nanomachine abuse in the form of Skull Face and friends.

△×□ We all know that the best way through a mission is spamming the tranquiliser gun at every opportunity. This guy's a god damn rookie.



SKILLS THAT KILLS

Talion has two skill trees to level up; one for his human abilities and another for his wraith powers. We'd imagine it'll be impossible to max out both...

SO ALONE

Our hero Talion is understandably perturbed at finding his family and homeland destroyed. It's always nice to have a protagonist you can relate to, right?

ETA 2014 | DEV MONOLITH | PUB WARNER BROS | TWITTER @MIDDLEEARTHGAME

Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor

Frodo, don't wear the ring



ALSO ON PS3

YOU'D THINK IT

would be easy to make a great *Lord Of The Rings* game, but think back and try to

remember some. *LOTR Online* is great, but that's based on the books. Warner Bros hasn't really done anything of note with the movie rights since *Return Of The King* back on the PS2.

That's all set to change, if developer Monolith has anything to say about it. *Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor* is being pushed as a very big deal.

You'll notice that nowhere in the title is there a reference to any rings, nor the person who lords over them. *Shadow*

Of Mordor is set between *The Hobbit* and *LOTR*, giving Monolith a fair bit of freedom when it comes to telling a story. Players will control ranger Talion, who begins the game finding himself and his family murdered by Sauron's forces. Death isn't enough to keep this guy down and he is soon revived with new, wraith-like powers. How, we don't yet know, but it's certainly a cool gameplay hook so we're fine with it.

The most interesting aspect of the game so far is something called the Nemesis System. Every enemy in the game will have a name, rank and memory. If an enemy survives a fight with you, they will remember, changing

their tactics and growing stronger in anticipation of fighting you again. The idea is that you'll create your own archenemies, clashing again and again in an entirely unscripted process. Sounds incredible, so long as it works.

Foes will have their own lives, the AI allowing them to act on their own. For example, you may come across two orcs duelling, or high-ranking enemies doling out orders to their minions. None of this is scripted, and it all plays out whether or not you are about to witness it.

The world even keeps going if you are killed. You eventually respawn, but time will have passed. The

enemy that killed you has probably been promoted, but may well have been killed themselves in an entirely unrelated incident.

It's all fascinating stuff, but we've seen plenty of times when a developer's ambitions have outweighed its ability. If the world of *Shadow Of Mordor* really is as alive and open as it sounds, we might have the first truly great Tolkien game in a long time.

Sam Smith

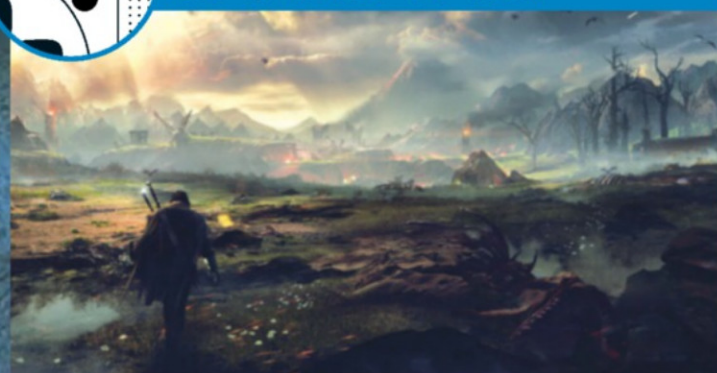
MIDDLE-EARTH: SHADOW OF MORDOR is being developed by Monolith. For info visit www.shadowofmordor.com

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King A wonderfully fun hack-and-slash adaptation. Best in co-op, with you and a mate going to town on Sauron's army of slimy orcs.



SHARE THIS



BIG WIDE WORLD

Stuck in Middle-earth

Shadows Of Mordor begins on the night Sauron returns to Mordor, decimating its struggling human community and beginning its descent into the barren wasteland we know from *LOTR*. Players will be free to explore this uncharted land during its slow corruption, and we imagine there will be plenty of great sights to see and share with friends. It's a chapter of Middle-earth history we haven't seen explored in great detail, so it will be interesting to get stuck in.

TWO'S COMPANY

Talion's wraith powers are actually the result of such a creature inhabiting his body thanks to his brush with death. We wonder how well they get along?

MY WORST ENEMY

If an enemy survives an encounter with you, they'll train and prepare for your next fight thanks to the Nemesis system. It's a fascinating concept.

△○×□ Just once we'd like to play as a cool dude without evil glowy eyes.

△○×□ The prospect of exploring pre-*LOTR* Mordor has a ton of potential.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



A new story that bridges the gap between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord Of The Rings*.



A living open world that exists regardless of whether you are about to see it happen.



Enemies remember you and plan for your next encounter – create your own nemeses.



An opportunity to explore Middle-earth before everything goes to hell!

ETA 2014 | DEV TANGO GAMEWORKS | PUB BETHESDA | TWITTER @THEEVILWITHIN

The Evil Within

Don't open that door!



SURVIVAL HORROR NEEDS

saving. It needs a herb, a health pack, a first aid spray, *something*. Just look at the state of it. Genre

grandad *Alone In The Dark* lost its marbles years ago, coughing up a shitty sequel that allowed you to skip entire sections of the broken mess; *Silent Hill* has been slowly rotting since the second game got it so hellishly right, seemingly by mistake if the rest are anything to go by; *Resident Evil* is too busy punching boulders and jumping sharks to worry about doing things the old-fashioned way. Even the great Japanese horror games that popped up to fill the gap seem to have vanished – *Fatal Frame* is about as apparent as its apparitions while *Siren*'s odd little run on PS3 was short lived. Indie games like *Amnesia* and *Slender* are doing their bit, sure, but when even dead certs like *Dead Space* have wandered off into cover shooter territory by mistake, you know something's up. Yeah, survival horror needs saving alright.

And who better to step in and try to make horror less horrible than one of the founding fathers of the gaming sub-genre, one Shinji Mikami – creator of the original *Resident Evil*. When he's not busy placing

mad or is the world simply all messed up and now full of spiky things and big angry things for a laugh? You'll (possibly) find out by the end but that's all you've got to go on for now, your detective checking out some seemingly innocuous crime scene when all of a sudden, things take a turn for the weird and Pyramid Head's furious cousin wants you dead for some reason or another.

All the classic tropes like ammo conservation, running away from danger and jumpy scares will return to torment you in the final game – it's been just about long enough since the original *Dead Space* now that we're ready to be creeped out like that again. That's perhaps how and why survival horror is in the state it's in today, after all – *Resident Evil* was so successful that the myriad copycat games that followed killed the impact of a classic horror template. Welcome back to the world of survival horror...

Luke Albigés

THE EVIL WITHIN is coming to PS3 and PS4 some time later this year. Find out more at www.theevilwithin.com

"THINGS TAKE A TURN FOR THE WEIRD AND PYRAMID HEAD'S FURIOUS COUSIN WANTS YOU DEAD"

crests in books where nobody will ever find them, dude has mad experience of the genre in its purest form, and it's this that Bethesda will be hoping he can bring to *The Evil Within*, one of the most traditional survival horror games in development right now and the bookies' favourite to set the genre back on the right track.

Like some of its other horror brethren (most notably *Silent Hill* and recent oddity *Deadly Premonition*), *The Evil Within* is set across two worlds, one that seems very much like our own and one that seems very much not. As usual, it's not entirely clear from the outset what exactly is triggering these transitions – is your character going



△×□ We're not sure who the surgeon responsible for this is, but we'd bet good money that he isn't medically qualified.



△×□ Who leaves an old-timey record player in an abattoir? Health And Safety are going to have something to say about this...



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It's traditional survival horror action with a lick of next-gen paint for good measure.



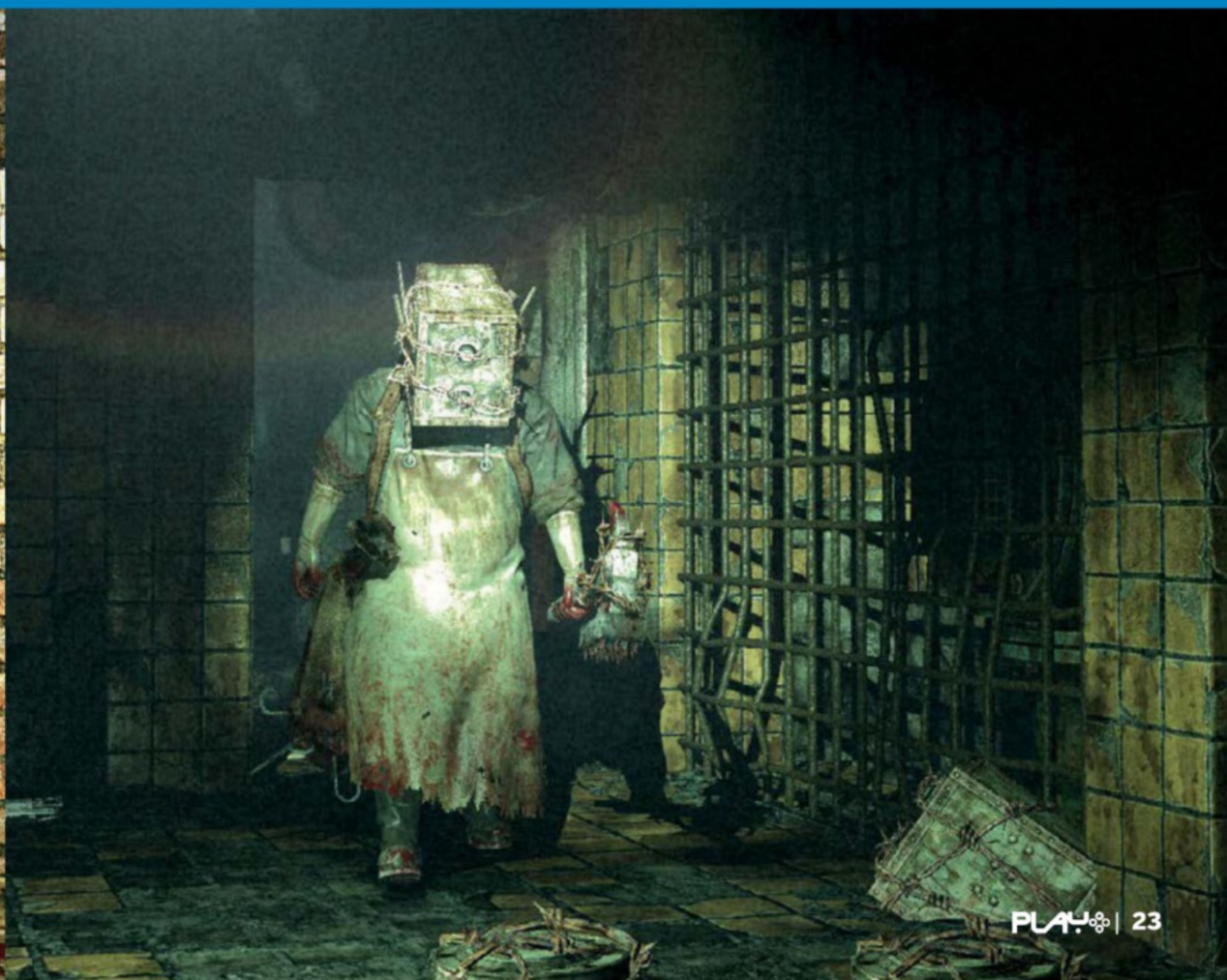
Horror veteran and *Resi* creator Shinji Mikami returns to the genre.

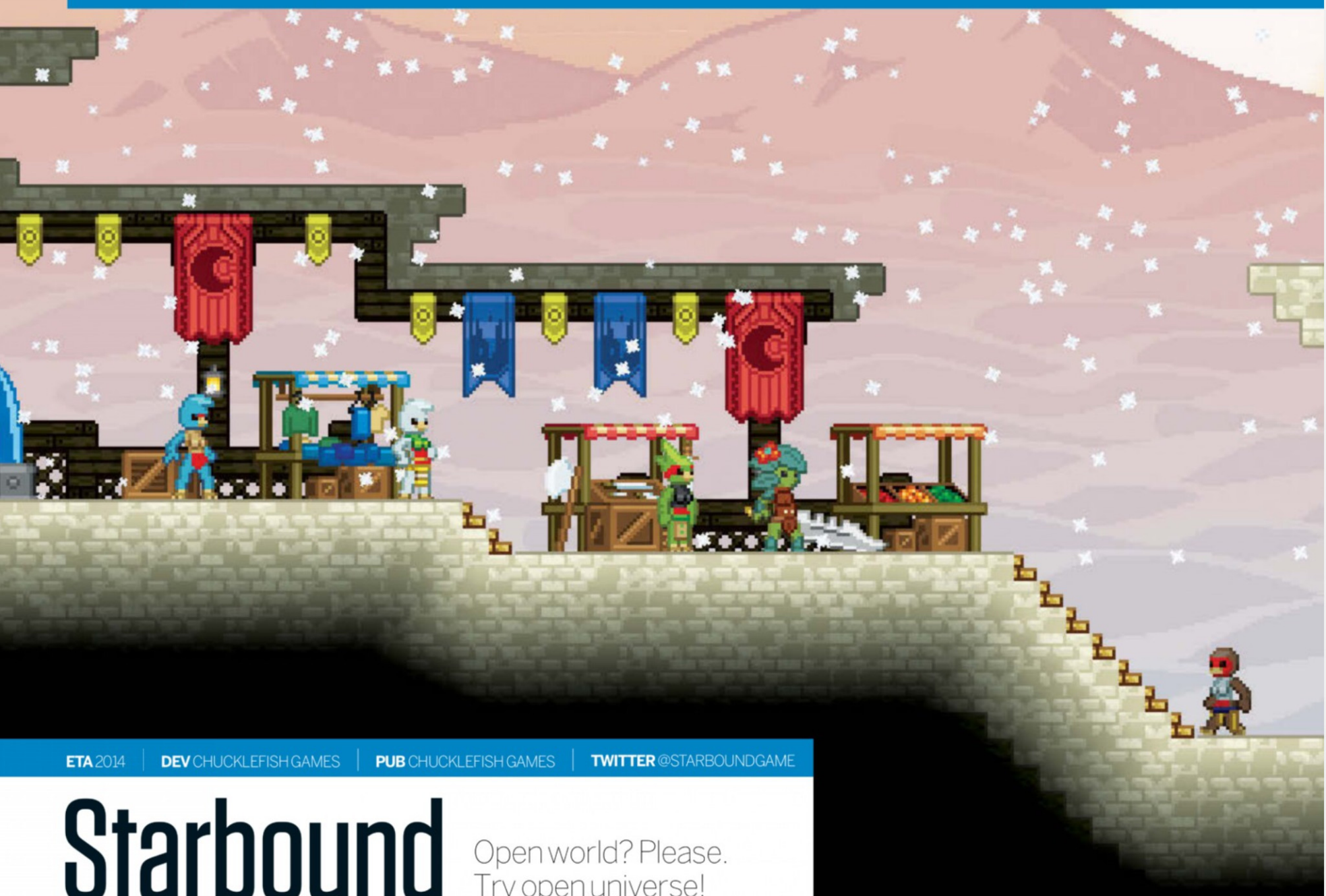


The twisted duality of a horrible realistic world and a horrible fantasy one.



Indie horror games are all the rage right now – expect similar scares but on a big budget.





ETA 2014 | DEV CHUCKLEFISH GAMES | PUB CHUCKLEFISH GAMES | TWITTER @STARBOUNDGAME

Starbound

Open world? Please.
Try open universe!



STARBOUND IS TERRARIA in space. Sold? Us too. That was quick...

If that little nugget of informative gold wasn't enough to pique your interest, we guess you'll have to keep reading. *Starbound* is an *open-universe* sandbox adventure that casts players as a character that has just fled their home planet, crash-landing on another. From there, you can do as you wish: build yourself a home and start farming the land, visit local settlements to take on quests and help the denizens, find a spaceship or simply run around twatting the wildlife with a lightsaber. Anything goes, basically.

Starbound owes a lot to *Terraria*, and some would say it goes as far as to blatantly rip it off. Players can dig down deep into the ground, uncovering resources, secret lairs, huge monsters and all manner of other surprises. The simple joy of exploring these caverns and tunnels is an endless one, and the core gameplay loop of mining to find new materials, making better mining tools with those materials and mining even further seems intact.

So far, so similar, but what seems to set the two games apart is the sheer scale of *Starbound*. Bored of the planet you are on? Not a problem – just hop in your own customisable spaceship and jet off to another one. Players can visit an endless number of procedurally generated planets, each with unique themes and features. Different terrain types, foliage, full water and day/night cycles, differing gravity levels, enemy behaviour, the types of materials available... there are a huge amount of variables that ensure each planet really is individual.

There also appears to be a tad more structure than *Terraria*, too. Story-based quest lines will unravel the tale of your character and the universe around you, and side-quests will ensure there's always something to do if you get bored of building castles. Of course, if all you want to do is dig down into the depths or jet up into the stars, feel free. *Starbound* is a sandbox, and relies on the imagination of players. The whole thing can be tackled solo or in multiplayer, and players can share the coordinates of a planet to allow others to visit.

The more structured approach carries over to the story. This might be a random universe, but its history is set in stone. Players can create their character as one of seven races, each with a detailed back-story. There's a nice range of variation on offer, from the religious, bird-like Avians to the pleasant-looking but violent Florans. Don't worry if you'd like something more familiar, as humans are available too. There's a surprising amount of narrative for a genre that tends to have no story whatsoever, but it's a welcome sense of place and importance, helping players create their own spiralling narrative for their character. *Starbound* feels like a 2D version of the recently announced *No Man's Sky*, and the reaction the games have gotten so far proves that human beings love to explore the uncharted. All we know is we never played in a sandbox this big when we were kids...

Sam Smith

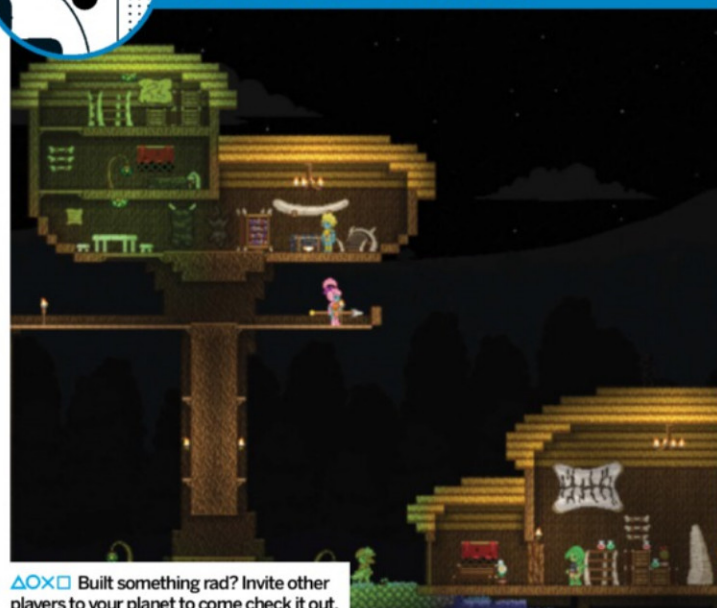
STARBOUND is being developed by Chucklefish Games. Check the website for more details: playstarbound.com

IN THE MEANTIME...

Terraria Basically the same game, except you can't go into *bloody* space. Otherwise, dig and build to your heart's content!



SHARE THIS



ΔOX□ Built something rad? Invite other players to your planet to come check it out.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

My tower is bigger than yours

GAMES LIKE *Starbound* were made for the Share button. What's the point in building an incredible fortress, underground lair or amazing spaceship if you can't

show it off to the world? Any game that revolves around player-generated content is guaranteed to draw a huge audience of viewers, eager for ideas to create their own

masterpiece. We've seen some of the mind-blowing stuff people have made in *Minecraft* and *Terraria* – now imagine the possibilities with a whole universe at your disposal.

ΔOX□ It's not *Terraria*, we swear... but the similarities can't be denied. Ambitious players are going to build some fantastic castles and fortresses.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

▲ It's *Terraria* in space! That is exactly as amazing a thing as it sounds.

□ Loads of story quests to either complete or ignore as you choose.

× Explore thousands of procedurally generated worlds at your leisure.

○ Make your own weapons and armour and take the fight to other players.



ΔOX□ We can't wait to see some of the cool sci-fi weapons you can create.

ETA JUNE | DEV CAPCOM | PUB CAPCOM | TWITTER @CAPCOM_UK

Ultra Street Fighter IV

44 characters but still no Q? Come on, Capcom...



FIGHTING GAMES ARE more popular than they've been in years, and it's all thanks to *Street Fighter IV*. Despite repeated assurances that each version is the last, *USFIV* will be the fourth major version of Capcom's figurehead brawler, and the first to introduce new gameplay mechanics.

The biggest change for most people will be the addition of five new characters, although the definition of 'new' may be pushing it. Four of these five – Poison, Hugo, Elena and Rolento – have been brought over from the lacklustre *Street Fighter X Tekken*, the same models seemingly ported over to a different game. Of course they don't play exactly the

same, as this is a slower game with its own engine and mechanics, but these are still essentially the same characters. The fifth new fighter is still a mystery, but game director Yoshinori Ono has given two clues: first, it's a character that has never been in a *Street Fighter* game before but is still related to the series, and second, it's a female. Honestly, we don't have a clue who it could be.

New characters are fancy and all, but the most important additions to *Ultra* are three new gameplay mechanics that have the potential to greatly change the way the game is played. First of these is delayed wake-up, letting you lie on the floor a little longer after getting knocked down. It doesn't sound like

much, but choosing when to get up can throw a huge wrench in the plans of characters like Akuma and Ibuki, who revolve around confusing you with attacks from all directions as you rise.

Second is the Red Focus Attack, an enhanced version of the attack-absorbing move introduced in the first *SFIV*. The red version eats a chunk of your super meter but absorbs a seemingly unlimited amount of attacks while it lasts, completely turning momentum in your favour. We still don't know the specifics of how much meter it costs and what exactly it can absorb, but it seems like an odd addition in a game already criticised for being too slow-paced and defensive. Whether it will become a key part of the game remains to be seen.

The final new mechanic is the ability to choose both Ultra Combos instead of one, giving the player more versatility in many situations. The trade-off is that the moves do a lot less damage – it's a significant reduction from what we've seen. Whether it's worth using will depend on match-ups, as usefulness will differ from fight to fight.

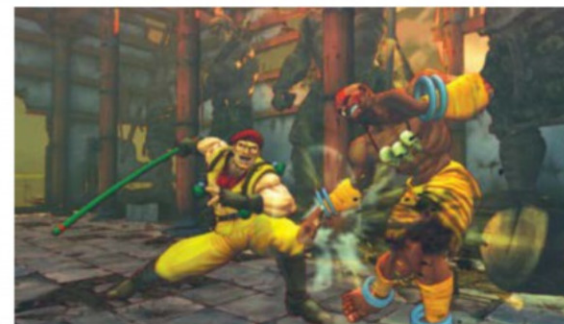
Along with all this in-your-face change, we've got another behind the scenes balance fix-up that will get all the die-hards salivating at the prospect of brand new tier lists. "But wait!" we hear you cry. "Why is Capcom releasing yet *another* new version of a game that I already own? Is it just trying to steal my fight money?"

"THE BIGGEST CHANGE FOR MOST PEOPLE WILL BE THE ADDITION OF FIVE NEW CHARACTERS"

△×□ If Elena plays like she did back in the 3rd Strike days, she'll be great fun.



△×□ Rolento was a spammy bastard in *SFXT*. Hopefully Capcom has sorted him out and knocked him down a peg.



Fighting games are fluid. Players are constantly discovering new strategies and glitches, and new characters and stages are often requested by the fans. "But," you reply, "why not drip-feed these updates as DLC rather than release a big new version every couple of years?" It's a valid question, but not one you'll hear a lot of serious fighting game players asking. In such a competitive genre, ensuring everyone is playing the same version of a game is key. Also, setting up dozens of consoles at tournaments would be incredibly time-consuming if each had to be checked for what specific DLC it had.

That isn't to say that Capcom is ignoring digital distribution. *Ultra SFIV* will come in three forms: a full package, available either at retail or digitally, and a digital-only upgrade to *Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition*. The standalone versions will come with all costume DLC released up to this point.

You've already decided whether you like *Street Fighter IV*. Some see it as an excellent entry point to the genre, others as a simplistic game that is slow and unrewarding. *Ultra SFIV* isn't going to change that: this is more of the same, and perhaps, this time, the final entry in the sub-series. See you at Evo!

Sam Smith

ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV is being developed by Capcom. Check the website for more details: www.streetfighter.com/us/usfiv

△×□ We'd say this will probably be the last version of *SFIV*... but then, we would have said that last time too.



△×□ Two characters originally introduced in *Final Fight*. Yes, we are nerds.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ A huge content update for the most popular fighting game in the world.
- Five new characters, one of which is a big mystery. Mysteries are exciting!
- × Three new mechanics make this the biggest change to the game since the original version.
- Buy the whole game or upgrade your current version for a reduced price.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

- I just wait for super ultra sf4 turbo. @VCurse
- Super disappointed the 5th character isn't Mike Haggar though @KancoCX
- I'm interested, but I still find SFIV too slow. @CharAznable

People keep making "Valve can't count to 3" jokes but clearly Capcom can't count to 5! **Jacque Marliin**

Should be on next gen especially if it's coming out Q3 2014 **Ian Dickson**

I bought Street Fighter 4 then they released Super Street Fighter 4. I get Super then they release Super Arcade Edition! **TO M MY**

△×□ Poison is the most basic of the new characters, pretty much following the simple projectile/anti-air template used by Ryu et al.



ETA SPRING 2014 | DEV OMEGA FORCE | PUB TECMO KOEI | TWITTER @TECMOKOEIEUROPE

Dynasty Warriors 8 Xtreme Legends Complete Edition

Apologise to your Square button in advance



WE LOVE DYNASTY WARRIORS

and we are not ashamed. It's a great series that supplies brainless fun and over-the-top action by the bucketload,

and *Dynasty Warriors 8* was the best entry in the franchise to date. Refining the already solid gameplay and adding a ton of content, including a unique weapon and moveset for every character, we thoroughly enjoyed it on PS3 last year.

But who cares about last year, man? This is 2014, the year of the PS4! We don't want to waste our precious time on *last-gen* games, and Tecmo Koei realises this. Yep, *Dynasty Warriors 8* is coming to PS4 and Vita, complete with the *Xtreme Legends* expansion that PS3 gamers will be able to buy as a standalone game.

If you want to know what we thought of *Dynasty Warriors 8*, dig out our review back in issue 234. To summarise, we really liked it, and by our account it's the best game in the series so far. The PS4

Dynasty Warriors: amid all the hacking and slashing, you are getting a (wildly exaggerated, not that accurate) history lesson. This all actually happened in ancient China... sort of.

Speaking of which, Lu Bu and his forces have their own story mode campaign now, and the other kingdoms will all receive new stages. There is also a bunch of new content for the already-huge Ambition mode, a combination of battles and base building that has already eaten up plenty of our time.

Xtreme Legends is also adding a new Challenge Mode, as if you didn't already have enough to do, and a second unique EX attack for every character, diversifying the enormous cast even further. The amount of content on offer here is seriously staggering, and combining the original and the expansion leaves you with at least 100 hours of quality action.

Interestingly, *DW8* makes the first use we've seen of interactive streaming. Viewers watching a stream

can choose to gift items directly to the player, such as healing meat buns or buffs to their attack or defence. It's a neat little feature, and it's odd that this is the first time we're seeing it in action.

Ultimately, if you had no time for *Dynasty Warriors* before, a shiner, bigger version on the PS4 isn't going to change your mind. Thing is, the critical reaction to *DW8* was the best the series has seen, and it feels like the franchise is turning a corner in terms of public opinion. People are finally starting to realise that they don't *have* to hate *Dynasty Warriors*, slowly growing to understand what it is about the series that has made it such a huge success in Japan. Trust us – it's actually pretty fun.

Sam Smith

DYNASTY WARRIORS 8 XTREME LEGENDS COMPLETE EDITION is being developed by Omega Force. Check the website for more details: dynastywarriors8.eu

"THE AMOUNT OF CONTENT ON OFFER HERE IS SERIOUSLY STAGGERING"

version will be essentially the same aside from some welcome graphical and performance updates. What's new is the *Xtreme Legends* expansion, adding a surprising amount of new stuff.

Most notable are the five new characters, bringing the total roster to a frankly ridiculous 78 playable characters. When you consider that every single one of them has a unique moveset, you realise just how incredible a statistic it is. You'd think the guys at Omega Force would be running out of historical figures by now, but they've managed to find five more: one each for the original three kingdoms of Wei, Wu and Shu, and two that fall into the 'Other' camp. The most interesting of the lot is Lu Lingqi, the daughter of crazy warmonger and all-around hard bastard Lu Bu (do not pursue him), but all five are worthwhile additions that have roles to play in the classic story. That's one of the undersold values of



△×□ There's a lot of real history to learn from the series, if you delve past the craziness. A full encyclopedia is included and can teach you a lot, if you desire to learn.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

● **Kessen** A strategy game set in feudal Japan, *Kessen* was a launch title for the PS2 in Japan. We remember it fondly, but it doesn't hold up too well today.



DYNASTY WARRIORS 8 BY NUMBERS

Everything's better with statistics

5 The number of playable factions: Shu, Wu, Wei, Jin and the mysterious 'Other'.

8 The number of games in the main *Dynasty Warriors* series.

40 The number of games in the broader 'Warriors' series, including spinoffs like *Samurai Warriors* and *One Piece: Pirate Warriors*.

78 The number of playable characters in *DW8: Complete Edition*.

100+ The amount of hours it's going to take to Platinum the game... at least.

1422 The approximate number of helpless soldiers you will brutally slaughter per mission.

△○×□ Zhao Yun, the pretty-boy hero of Shu, always seems to be on the cover. Being staunch Wu supporters, this angers us. Where is our Sun Quan cover?

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Dynasty Warriors is great fun – if you disagree, we aren't friends anymore.



The full original game plus the *Xtreme Legends* expansion in one package.



Just shy of 80 unique characters, all with their own weapons and movesets.



Prettier, smoother and faster than the PS3 version – hooray!

△○×□ We don't really understand people who don't like *Dynasty Warriors*. What part of this does not appeal to you? You bizarre miscreants...

ANATOMY OF... DRACULA

Lords Of Shadow 2 is busy proving there's plenty of life in the PS3, so we figured it was time to take a peek at Gabriel Belmont, now going by the more punchy mantle of Dracula. You might have heard of him...

HATIN' ON SATAN

Belmont learns of the 'God Mask', an artefact that may contain the power to resurrect his wife. He defeats the Lords of Shadow and finds the pieces of the God Mask, but discovers that Satan has been behind the whole scheme. Gabriel defeats Satan and reverses his spell, releasing all the souls trapped in limbo. Unfortunately, Maria still isn't resurrected.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Gabriel was a member of the Brotherhood of Light, an elite group of holy knights who protect and defend the innocent from supernatural creatures. His wife Maria is killed in an attack, but thanks to a dark spell by the Lords of Shadow, her soul (and the souls of all other recent deceased) are trapped in limbo. Gabe sets out to reverse the spell and save the soul of his wife.

ATTACK OF THE DRAC

A couple of DLC packs expand the story detailing Gabriel's downfall. In tackling an ancient evil known as The Forgotten One, Gabe has to drink the blood of a vampire to enter its realm. After defeating The Forgotten One, Gabriel claims its powers. We don't know the full story after this, but the epilogue to the game shows Gabe, now Dracula, waking up in our modern world.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

Which brings us to *Lords Of Shadow 2*. Dracula has woken for the first time in centuries to find a world that is new and alien to him. Worse still, Satan has returned and is back to his evil ways. To add insult to injury, both the Belmont clan and Gabe's son Alucard (it's Dracula backwards) want him dead. It's tough, being a modern vampire in the 21st Century.

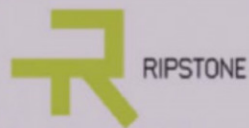
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Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2

PS3

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△○×□ Expect to see all of your favourite characters from *The Hobbit* appear, accompanied by dialogue ripped straight from the films.



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Lego The Hobbit

An expected journey



ALSO COMING TO PS3 & VITA

AS MUCH AS we love this industry, there are some aspects of it that baffle us beyond words, a dangerous prospect when you consider that it's words that pay our bills. Of course November will see the release of a new *Call Of Duty*, and don't you dare doubt for a second that *FIFA 15* will be announced in the spring, and so it really should come as no surprise that TT Games is dipping its hands back into the pop-culture coffer to rebuild the world of *The Hobbit* out of Lego pieces. Honestly, we are surprised it took this long to get an announcement out in the wild.

While the world at large is still buying into Peter Jackson's blatant cash-grab, (look, we seriously doubt JRR Tolkien ever envisioned his 300-page children's story as a nine-plus hour trilogy, what

with the rising price of cinema tickets and all) and we are more than content with getting some buddies together and partaking in an expected adventure from the comfort of our living rooms with two DualShock controllers to hand. *Lego The Hobbit* will be based on the first two films in the motion picture trilogy, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* and *The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug*, perhaps proving our suspicions that the third flick is simply an excuse for Jackson to see what Elijah Wood's bouncy hobbit hair would look like in 48 FPS.

Stepping into the square, plastic shoes of Bilbo Baggins, Gandalf the Grey and all 13 of their dwarven companions, we will depart on a journey to reclaim the Kingdom of Erebor from the clutches of the evil dragon Smaug. The adventure will take us from Bag End, to Rivendell, to the forests of Mirkwood – and we



SHARE THIS



CAMEOS GALORE

Keep a sharp eye on Middle-earth

An element of the *Lego* games that we've always loved is TT Games's keen eye for slotting in clever cameos and jokes for fans of the original source material. You'll no doubt want to have your finger hovering over the Share button as you keep a look out for misplaced characters and perhaps even little nods to Warner Bros' other *Lord Of The Rings* game, *Shadow Of Mordor*.

PRIOR FORM

● **Lego Marvel Super Heroes** dazzled us late into 2013, proving that there is still plenty for TT Games to re-build out of Lego and plenty for us to enjoy.

△○×□ As with anything, exploring Middle-earth will be better with friends. The *Lego* games are still among the best couch co-op games on the market...

△○×□ If Bilbo thought the dwarves were destructive in *An Unexpected Journey*, he hasn't seen anything yet. Nothing is sacred as we set out to smash everything.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ *The Hobbit* is a great gateway into the world Tolkien crafted.
- TT proved that it has what it takes to craft a great *Lego* game with *Marvel Super Heroes*.
- × Each character will have their own abilities; Bombur can be used as a trampoline.
- *Lego The Hobbit* will be based on the first two films in Peter Jackson's movie trilogy.

can only hope TT Games has the good sense to let us do the Misty Mountain Hop over the High Pass, otherwise we shall be having words. The studio may have been dropping us into Lego versions of our favourite fictional universes for almost a decade, but the allure never seems to fade.

Admittedly, TT's last foray into the world Tolkien so lovingly crafted didn't quite live up to its potential, but the studio seems to have uncovered a renewed sense of creativity and passion – *Lego Marvel Super Heroes* was too good for us to simply shrug *The Hobbit* off as a poorly-timed cash in. Unlike *The Lord Of*

The Rings – which has a tendency to be very straight faced and stout, end of all times and all that – *The Hobbit* is a pretty light adventure with a rhyming dragon. For Sauron's sake, was there ever a property so perfectly poised to be taken by TT Games? The tongue-in-cheek comedy the *Lego* games are so renowned for basically writes itself when it comes to *The Hobbit*.

If you're a fan of the original novel, sick of Jackson's approach to Tolkien's work or just want a cooperative game you can stick on with company, then it's highly likely you've already made your mind up on *Lego The Hobbit*. TT Games will take

the enjoyable *Hobbit* story and channel it into an endlessly enjoyable adventure that won't drain your energy and bank account. Save the cash you had set aside for those cinema tickets, get your ass down to your local game store and stick a pre-order down – TT Games is one of the most trustworthy studios in the industry, and we can't wait to smash open Middle-earth piece by glorious piece.

Josh West

LEGO THE HOBBIT is being developed by TT Games. Check the website for more details: www.ttgames.com

PREVIEW

THIEF

PS4

Instant Expert

GOOD NEWS GARRETT

Our boy Garrett is a master thief, and as such players have a number of ways to achieve each objective. Stealth is key, from sticking to the shadows and picking pockets to disguising yourself and infiltrating high-class parties. Violence is an option, but usually only as a last resort. If you find yourself squaring off with a bunch of guards, run – you won't be able to fight them all.

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Garrett returns to The City, a dark metropolis inspired by Victorian and steampunk aesthetics, after several years away. The City is ruled by a tyrant known as The Baron, and things have gone to shit under his rule. A plague infests the poor while the rich live in vulgar extravagance. Is Garrett a social crusader, looking to right the imbalance? Nope – he looks to exploit the situation to his own benefit.

A REBOOT TO THE FACE

You might have played *Thief* before, but it doesn't really matter. This is a reboot, and although old fans might recognise a few things, the new *Thief* is accessible to all. Players still control master thief Garrett, although whether he's the same one as before or a new version in a new canon, we don't yet know.

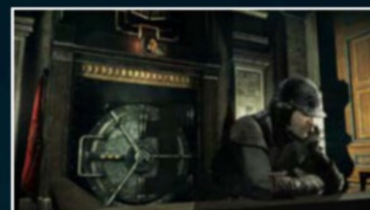
PAY ATTENTION

Garrett can enter a 'Focus' mode, lending him several advantages. The player's vision is enhanced, highlighting items in the environment that can be interacted with, such as pipes that can be climbed or candles that can be blown out to darken the area. Focus can also slow down time, improve Garrett's lock-picking, or be used to deliver debilitating attacks if you find yourself cornered.

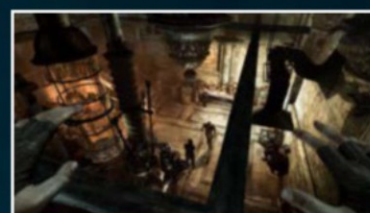
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

The player has a bunch of cool junk at their disposal. The best of all is Garrett's retractable compound bow, which can be used both to dispatch enemy guards and distract them by firing arrows nearby. There's also a grapple to reach high areas (also because grapples are awesome) and a blackjack club for if things get tense up close.

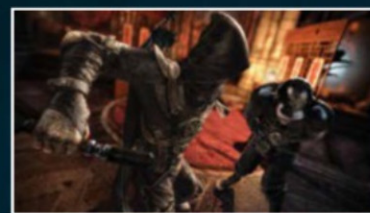
A BRIEF HISTORY OF STEALTH



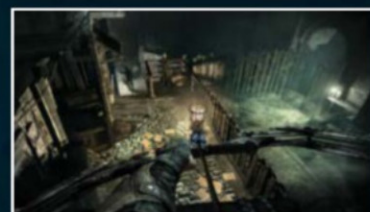
The first stealth game was *005*, an arcade release from Sega in 1981. A few games used the concept in the following years, such as *Castle Wolfenstein* or the original two *Metal Gear* games on MSX.



However, it wasn't until the release of *Metal Gear Solid* in 1998 that the stealth genre really exploded. Along with new games *Tenchu* and *Thief*, stealth became a huge hit with gamers. Suddenly, every game seemed to need a stealth section, regardless of whether it actually fit in the game or, unfortunately, whether it was any good.



It didn't take long for a backlash from fans, irritated at an apparently obligatory addition of stealth elements to every game they played. The problem was probably worst in the early PS2 years, when every platformer and action game seemed to shoehorn in a bit of stealth for the sake of it.



However, we've undoubtedly turned a corner. Stealth games have evolved from the basic staples of staying out of sight and avoiding combat to cover a huge wealth of gameplay styles, from using light and shadows to remain unseen to distracting guards with noise and blending in with crowds to hide in plain sight. *Thief* was the first ever first-person stealth game, but the genre seems to have caught on more in recent years, with games such as *Dishonored* showing that the claustrophobia of being stuck inside a viewpoint, unable to scope your surroundings without compromising your position, might be the best way of all to do stealth.

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PREVIEW ROUND-UP



Some games came out ages ago, others are about to be released and some are miles off. Here, you'll find a selection of games from the latter two categories, but which will be next to join your collection?

PS3



TALES OF ZESTIRIA

THE TALES SERIES seems to be growing more popular in the West, and for the first time a new entry has been announced for Japan, America and Europe at the same time. So far we've seen two characters: Slay, a young warrior, and Alicia, a warrior princess. According to series head honcho Hideo Baba, the setting will be much more of a 'pure' fantasy world than the last few games and dragons will have a strong presence in the story. Man, ever since *Game Of Thrones*, dragons have been everywhere, huh?

RELEASE DATE: 2014

VITA



DEKAMORI SENRAN KAGURA

GAMERS OF A CERTAIN... persuasion may be interested in this new entry in the *Senran Kagura* franchise, a series of action games revolving around a school of female ninjas that *entirely coincidentally* happen to all have massive breasts and also *entirely coincidentally* seem to get stripped down to

near-nudity on a worryingly frequent basis.

This one's a bit different though: not an action game, but a... rhythm-action cooking battle game where the losing team's clothes come off. Erm? Dekamori translates to 'large portions', apparently – read into that what you will.

RELEASE DATE: MARCH (JAPAN)

PS4



DAYLIGHT

OUR SECOND HORROR game follows a similar setup: your character wakes up in a hospital with nothing but a mobile phone (no signal, obviously) to illuminate the darkness. The difference lies in the fact that each game of *Daylight* is procedurally generated, creating a new world with a new layout and enemy encounters. In other games, the scares are diminished by familiarity – it's never quite as bad the second time round. But when every game is a new experience, you can't predict what's to come.

RELEASE DATE: 2014

PS4



DEEP DOWN

CAPCOM'S FREE-TO-PLAY RPG looks ever more interesting. Sure, it looks a lot like *Dark Souls*, but trust us when we say that ain't a bad thing. There's also a touch of *Assassin's Creed* in there, as players explore ancient dungeons from the 'memories' stored in recovered artefacts. Running on the new Panta Rhei engine (which means 'everything flows') the game certainly looks the part, with atmospheric tunnels full of nasty monsters and some seriously impressive particle and lighting effects to boot.

RELEASE DATE: 2014

PS4

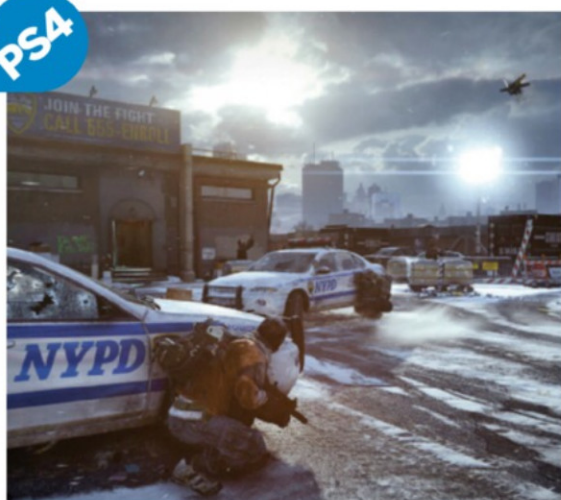


THE LAST GUARDIAN

THE LAST GUARDIAN is still on the way... right? That's the case according to Sony, which has continually stated that the next game from Team Ico, which started development in 2007, is still being made. It's hard to stay positive when we haven't seen anything new in years, but it's just like PaRappa always says: we just have to believe. The game was originally scheduled to hit PS3 in 2011, but we can't help but think that development has since switched to the PS4. Keep your chins up, guys.

RELEASE DATE: TBA

PS4



THE DIVISION

THERE HAVE BEEN rumblings recently that *Tom Clancy's The Division* has been pushed into 2015. A source within Ubisoft has reportedly claimed that the engine works well, but that actual game development has barely begun. It's unfortunate if true, but hardly surprising – this is a huge game that looks set to create a next-gen benchmark, and it's going to take a while. Just as with *Watch Dogs*, if the extra time in development means the game will meet its huge potential then we're fully behind it.

RELEASE DATE: TBA

PS3



DARK SOULS II

NOT MUCH LONGER to wait until we plunge into the sequel to one of the best games of the generation. From the looks of it, it's more of the same, but that's not exactly something to complain about. Covenants will be better explained, which should help the game's PvP scene and encourage more players to give the online play a chance. The graphics engine has been improved too and more advanced AI will give enemies a wider range of reactions. Did we mention we really like *Dark Souls*?

RELEASE DATE: 14 MARCH

PS4



OUTLAST

THE FIRST OF two first-person horror games on this list, *Outlast* has already released on PC to critical acclaim. Step into the shoes of Miles Upshur (stupid name) as he explores the ruined and (supposedly) abandoned Mount Massive Asylum. Similar to *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*, there's no way to fight enemies – all you can do is run. Much of the asylum is draped in darkness, forcing you to view things through the night vision mode of Miles's video camera. And better yet, it's free on PS+ this month.

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2014

PS4



DAYZ

THE PC SMASH that started as a mod for *Arma II* has finally launched a standalone version to the delight of fans everywhere. It's still only in alpha state (you know, the one before beta) but it's a step closer to what we hope is an inevitable PS4 version.

Creator Dean 'Rocket' Hall has said that a console release is "almost certain", claiming that he's had talks with Microsoft and Sony about releasing PS4 and Xbox One versions. That's the good news – the bad news is that the team will not be considering the

RELEASE DATE: TBA

console version until the game has been released fully on PC, which could be some way off.

"But what is *DayZ*?" you ask. Think of it as a survival sim: you are dropped into an online world with nothing, and your aim is to simply not die. There are roaming zombies that want to eat your face, you must eat and drink regularly and weapons, items and food are extremely rare. But the biggest danger to your continued wellbeing is other players. Player interaction is the real heart of *DayZ*. We can't wait.

PS4



EVERQUEST NEXT

GOOD NEWS, EVERYONE: *EverQuest Next* is definitely coming to PS4. Bad news? We haven't got a clue when. *EverQuest Next* is looking to revolutionise the MMORPG, with a huge world made up of voxels that can be destroyed and rebuilt as you choose. Think *Minecraft*, but in an MMO. Sounds good, huh? Players can also use the 'Landmark' creation tool to make buildings, landmarks and quests that then have a chance of being placed into the main game for everyone to see or play.

RELEASE DATE: TBA

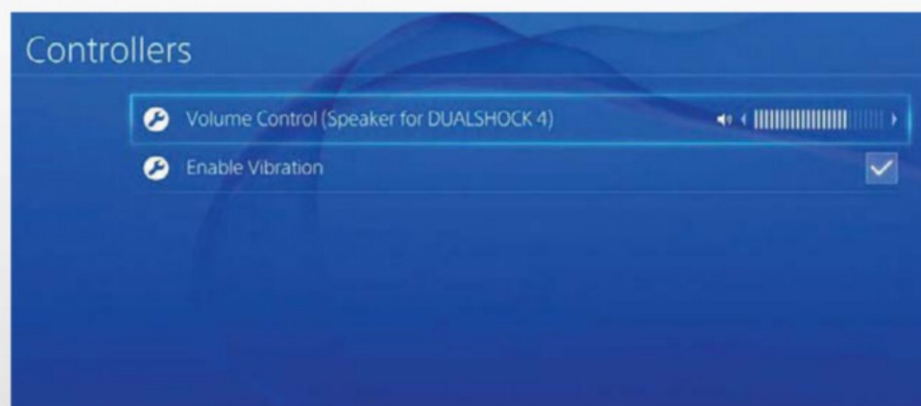
25 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOUR PS4 COULD DO

YOU'VE PROBABLY GOT THE PS4 BASICS DOWN BY THIS POINT, BUT THERE'S MORE TO LEARN. CHECK OUT (AND TRY OUT) THESE ADVANCED TIPS AND TRICKS...



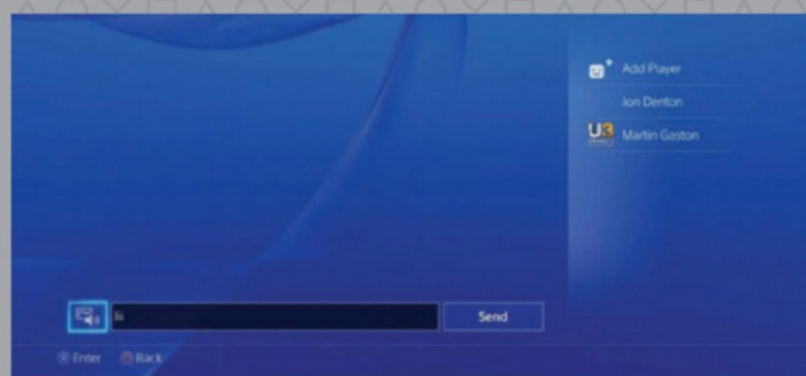
1 CHECK BATTERY, ADJUST VOLUME

A fairly simple one this, but you'd be amazed at how few people know it exists. If you hold the PS button on your DualShock 4, you'll bring up an otherwise hidden menu. From there, go to Adjust Devices and you can change the audio output of your pad, change the volume of your DualShock 4 speaker (stop shouting, *Resogun* lady), adjust chat volume and check the battery level of your controller (never enough). From here, you can also turn the PlayStation 4 off or whack it into Standby mode. You can do all of this mid-game too, without having to close the application – handy if you're in the middle of administering a damn good thrashing to someone on *FIFA*.





“YOU CAN DO ALL OF THIS MID-GAME TOO – HANDY IF YOU’RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THRASHING SOMEONE ON FIFA”

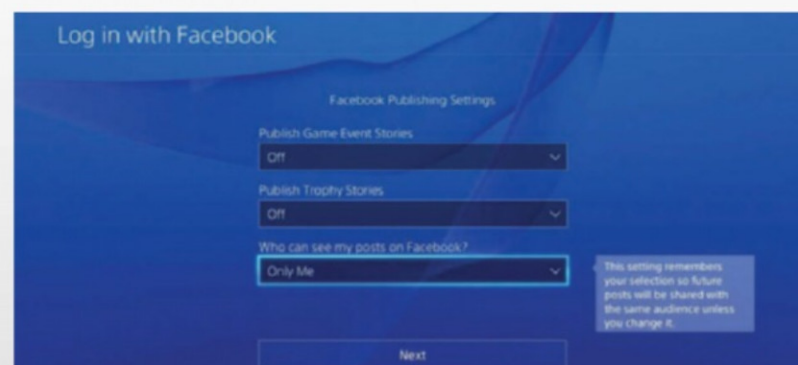


2 ATTACH IMAGES TO MESSAGES

As mentioned elsewhere, the communication options on PS4 are considerably improved over PS3, so you're far more likely to be messaging your buddies regularly than you ever were before. And now you can attach stuff to your messages, like voice clips or images. So if you take a cool snapshot on a game, you can fire it in a message to your friends. Just go to the picture that looks like a speaker next to your message text, then you can easily select a screenshot. Lovely.

3 CUSTOMISE AUDIENCE FOR SHARE

Chances are you don't want everyone you've ever met to see that clip of you blowing up a chopper with a grenade in *Battlefield 4*, so you'll need to adjust your audience settings. Go to Settings, then PSN, then 'Link With Other Services'. Choose either Facebook or Twitter, then go to 'Publish Settings'. Finally, you'll have a box that says 'Who can see my posts on Facebook?' From there you make your choice. If you were using the screens or video for another reason (like, say, writing a feature about 25 PS4 tips and tricks), then select 'Only Me' so no other mug has to see all your annoying pictures.





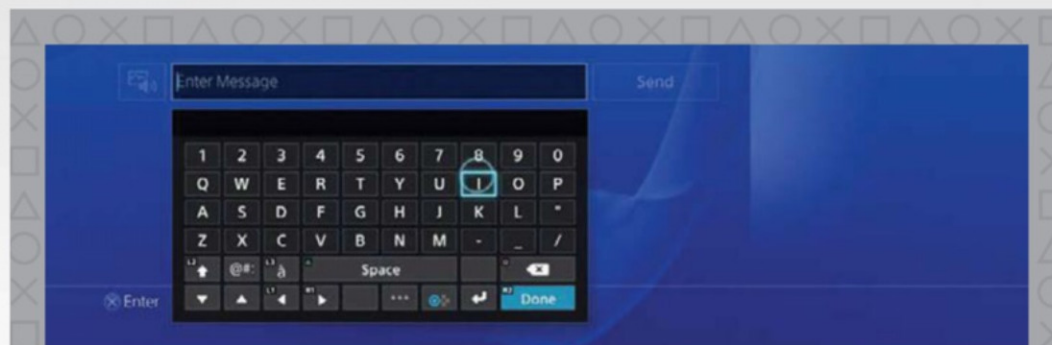
4 CONTROL DASHBOARD WITH VOICE ON HEADSET

You might already know that you can control the PS4 dashboard with your voice if you have a PS4 camera, but did you know you can also do it with a headset? Yes, even that dreadful earbud thing. Just plug it in and say "PlayStation" then your command of choice. For example, "PlayStation, Power" will turn it off, while "PlayStation, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*" will... we're pretty sure you can work that one out.



6 FULL-SCREEN STREAMING

Enjoying the PS4's Twitch functionality but still want your full-screen experience? In the Share menu, hit the Options button and find 'Share Settings'. From there, you should see an option that lets you turn off comments. So you might miss out on people chatting with you but you will get the full majesty of PS4 across your glowing panel.



5 GYROSCOPE TYPING

With improved friend communication on PS4, chances are you'll be typing a fair bit more than you used to on PS3. If so, this feature might save you some time and effort. When you have the on-screen keyboard up, click in the right analogue stick and you can move the cursor around with the DS4's gyroscope. It takes a minute to get used to, but soon you'll be typing at rapid speed. You can also set up a tablet as a second screen if you're feeling particularly cool.



7 PLUG HEADPHONES INTO CONTROLLER

That little hole on the bottom of the DualShock isn't just for a headset. You can actually plug a proper set of headphones in there and hear the PS4 audio directly through the pad. It's a lifesaver if you're using a headset that doesn't include a mile-long cable, and it also means you don't have to fish around the back of your telly when all you want to do is play some bloody *Knack*.



8 PS VITA REMOTE PLAY AS SECOND CONTROLLER

If you've only got one DualShock 4 (and who can blame you at that price) but you've got people round who want to play with you, then good news – you can actually use the PS Vita as a second controller. Just fire up Remote Play on the Vita and then sign in as a guest on your DualShock 4 and you're away. Obviously Vita control is inferior for games like *FIFA*, but it's still a handy workaround until you remortgage your house to be able to afford a second pad.



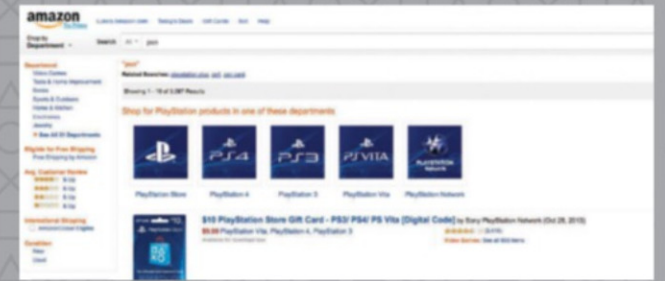


9 CLOUD ACCESS FOR PSN

One of the best features of the PS4 is Cloud Saves. Now, if you're like us, you might switch off whenever anyone bangs on about 'The Cloud', but in this case it's worth listening to. Wherever you sign in on your PSN account you'll have access to your download library, but also your game saves. So if you're at a friend's and they don't have *NBA 2K14* but you do, then download it to their console and play away (after waiting 17 years for it to download). When you sign back in at home it simply disappears into the ether on their machine.



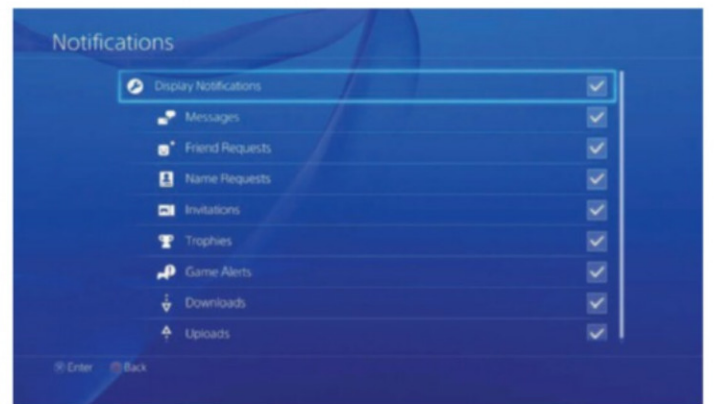
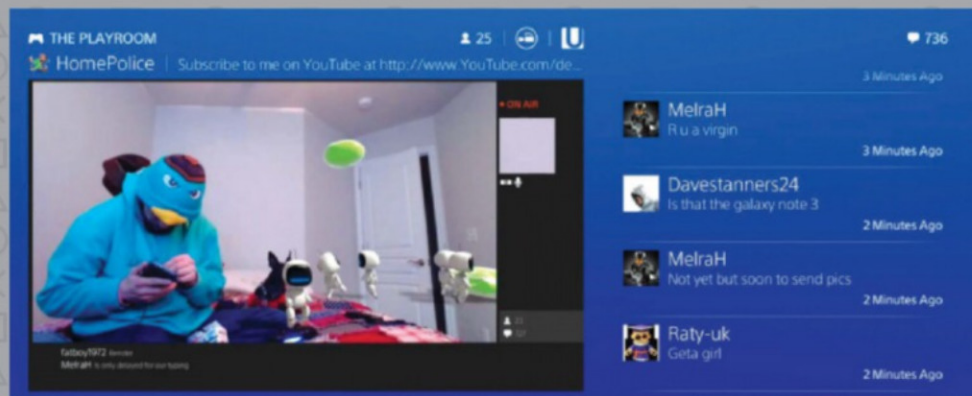
11 SET UP A US ACCOUNT



If you want to buy cheap games on the Amazon US digital store, then you're going to need a US account. Go to 'Create New User', and enter your address as an American address (The White House is a classic). From there, when asked to enter a US shipping address, use Borderlinx to find one. Then set up a US account on Amazon.com and find the Amazon PS4 Digital Store. Download whatever you fancy (far cheaper than the UK PSN Store), and redeem your code on your US PSN account. Now, activate your US PSN account as your Primary Account in your PS4 settings and your US games will be available on your UK account. Genius.

10 STREAM YOURSELF TO USTREAM

If you've been keeping up with the gaming news, you might already know about this one. Within minutes of the PS4's arrival in the States, a few savvy players figured out that you could stream webcam footage of your room over Twitch and Ustream by playing The PlayRoom. A couple of gamers actually created their own talk show like this, much to the acclaim of the games press and Sony itself. Then, unsurprisingly, people started taking their clothes off in other streams and Twitch banned The PlayRoom. Ustream didn't though, so if you want the world to see you, then stream away there. Just keep your kit on, eh?



12 REMOTE PLAY OVER WIFI

If you want to use Remote Play from a distance, you're going to have to fiddle with some settings. Head into the main settings menu in the dashboard and find 'PS Vita Connection Settings'. From there, uncheck the box that says 'Connect Directly With PS Vita'. This means your machine will be forced to connect to the Vita over your WiFi network.

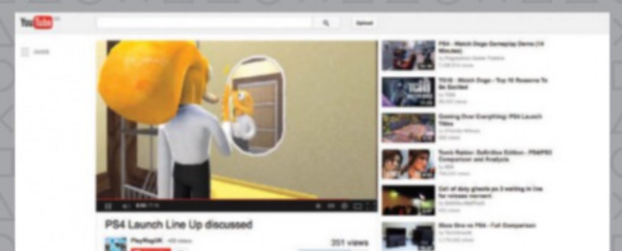


13 INDIVIDUAL NOTIFICATION ADJUSTMENTS

Notifications are a strange beast. For the most part, finding out when you've pinged a Trophy or seeing when a friend wants to talk to or play with you is very useful. Sometimes, though, it's a nightmare. If you're making a high score run on *Resogun*, you don't really need to know that some buddy of yours wants to play *FIFA*. And if you're immersed in a single-player game, having constant reminders that you're playing a videogame can be very distracting. It's why David Cage adamantly wanted Trophy notifications disabled in *Heavy Rain* on PS3. Here, you can adjust every notification type individually on the Notifications menu in Settings.

14 UPLOAD CLIPS TO YOUTUBE

Don't get too excited. This is a workaround and not technically a PS4 feature, but if you really want your greatest gaming moments to appear on the world's largest video site, then this is how to do it. Capture your video using Share and upload it to Facebook after editing. From there, you'll need an application like FBDown, which will let you download the clip to your hard drive. Make sure it's in the right file format for YouTube, and then upload it. Yes it's a pain in the arse and no it's not going to be 1080p and the quality will be a touch compressed, but it is a viable workaround until YouTube becomes native to PS4.



Video Clip Settings

- ☒ Include Microphone Audio in Video Clip
Include microphone audio from the headset or PlayStation®Camera when recording gameplay video.
- ☒ Display Icons for Blocked Scenes

15 ENABLE MIC FOR VIDEO CLIPS

If you want to start your burgeoning video capture career using the PS4's bespoke tools, then you're going to want the good people of planet PlayStation to hear your beautiful voice. In Share Settings, go to 'Video Clip Settings' and check the box that says 'Include Microphone Audio in Video Clip'. Now you can natter over your gameplay to your heart's content and anyone watching will just have to put up with it. Or just stop watching.

Set Functions Available in Standby Mode

While in standby mode, the PS4 can prepare for the next time you use it. Select the features for standby mode you want to use. If you don't select anything, the PS4 will turn off without entering standby mode.

- ☒ Supply Power from USB Ports
- ☒ Connect to the Internet
- ☒ Enable Turning On of PS4 from Network

17 DOWNLOAD WHILE SLEEPING

Another vaunted feature (and something that actually crept into the PS3 via PS Plus), but you can set your PS4 to update itself and games while it sleeps, so you never have to suffer the ignominy of tediously watching a status bar creep towards 100 per cent again. Go to 'Power Saving Settings' in Settings, and then 'Set Functions Available In Standby mode'. If you have the box entitled 'Connect To The Internet' checked, then your PS4 will grab updates online without ever having to bother you. Glorious.

19 SWITCH THE SHARE FUNCTION

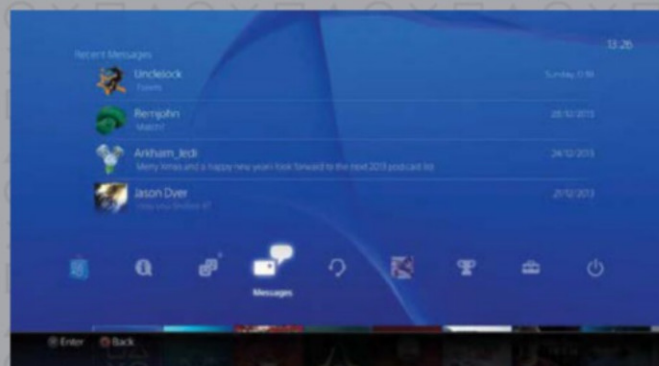
As standard, the share button requires a single press to save the last 15 minutes of footage as a clip, so you can edit and upload it later. In truth, though, that's probably not as useful a function as the ability to take an instant screenshot whenever you see something cool. If you want to change the button's function so a quick stab takes a snapshot, hit the Share button, then press Options. From there, you can go into Share Settings and simply switch to 'Easy Screenshots'.

Share Settings

- ☒ SHARE Button Control Type
Easy Screenshots
- ☐ Video Clip Settings
- ☐ Broadcast Settings
- ☐ Link with Other Services

16 APP QUICK SWAP

A really useful little feature that no one knows about. Much like Alt-Tabbing on a PC, you can jump between apps by double-tapping the PS button on your controller. Here's an example – playing a game of *Battlefield* and someone sends you an invite? Then do the usual thing and find that invite in the menus. Then double-tap and you're back in the game. Someone sends a message after that, and another double-tap will get your right back to that part of the dash.



18 REPLACE HARD DRIVE

Much like the PS3, you can switch out your PS4 hard drive and replace it with something bigger and/or faster. It's easy enough, just click off the top of your machine and unscrew the five screws holding your current drive in place (er, make sure your machine is off and unplugged). From there, any hard drive can be popped in. For the best combination of price, speed and storage, we'd recommend a Hybrid drive although some particularly well-off folk are going for terabyte SSD. They have more money than sense, though, as the speed boost is minimal over a Hybrid.



20 LOG IN WITH YOUR FACE

It's one of the Xbox One's killer features and a significant part of that machine's marketing push, but the PS4 can do it too. Sony just doesn't feel the need to shout about it, because it's gimmicky in its purest form. But yes, by standing in front of your PS4 camera you can log in with your own face, because sometimes a solitary button press on a controller just isn't quick enough. A cool feature to show off to your friends, but not exactly a game-changer.





FIVE THINGS THE PS4 WILL DO SOON

A few of the functions that are due to be rolled out in the near future



1 PLAYSTATION NOW

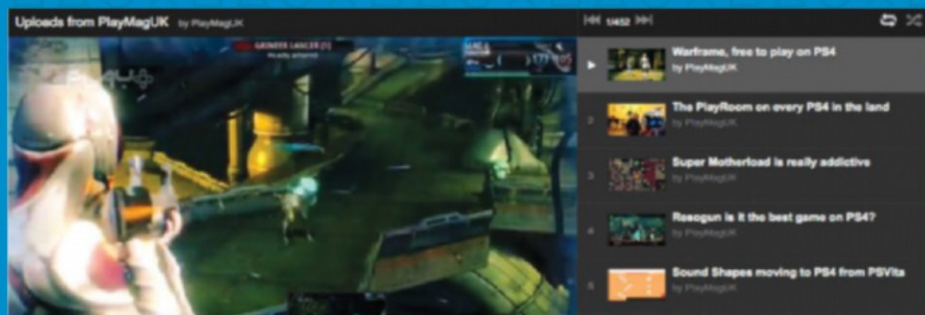
It might seem like a pipe dream, but Sony didn't spend \$380 million dollars on Gaikai for nothing. Dave Perry's global streaming service will hit the PS4 later this year as PlayStation Now, and promises a Netflix-style instant access to PS3 and PS2 libraries whenever you fancy. Clearly, the technology is not quite ready at this stage (it's just going into beta in the US), so Sony is holding fire to launch hard when it's all working. If PS Now lives up to its promise, though, it could be a revolutionary delivery method for consoles.

2 HDMI VIDEO CAPTURE



For such a forward-thinking machine, this irritating restriction on PS4 is maddening for those who enjoy (or indeed make a living from) creating video-based gaming content. The inability to capture footage over HDMI was a 'feature' on PS3 too, but few could have predicted this outmoded way of thinking would appear on PS4 too.

It's due to be removed on a game-by-game basis in the future, and is presumably in place to encourage players to stream natively on Twitch, or share clips on Facebook, but it's needlessly restrictive and has already sent many of the 'big' YouTubers over to Xbox One.



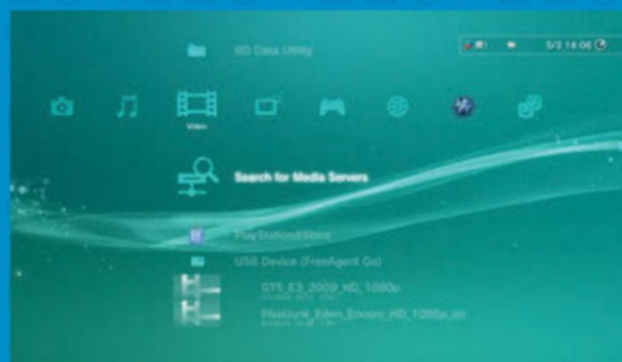
4 NATIVE YOUTUBE UPLOAD

Carrying on from the lack of HDMI video capture is the bizarre non-inclusion of YouTube sharing functionality. The PS4 video capture suite isn't world class, but it's more than capable of letting players share hilarious glitches or heroic moments. Except, you can only see them via traditional social media, meaning you have to spam your aunts and old school friends with videos of someone running through a wall in *Killzone*. Future native YouTube support has been talked about for some time, and is a must if the PS4 Share functionality is going to truly take off.



3 SUSPEND

One of the features Sony seemed most excited about during the initial PS4 reveal back in February last year was Suspend. If you've used a Vita, you'll already know what this is all about – simply hit a button and your game will freeze in place while the machine sleeps, ready to instantly restart whenever you decide to continue. A system-level pause, effectively. Sadly, it didn't make it for launch (despite being a part of Xbox One, frustratingly) but it is promised for a future update. Suspend might not sound that important, but it will completely change the way you play – you might never need to see the menus again.




5 DLNA MEDIA SERVER

This is a truly strange omission. Sony actually invented the DLNA server some ten years ago, and the ability to morph your PS3 into a home media server became one of its key functions among the hardcore – hence the 'It Only Does Everything' slogan in the US. As it stands, though, the PS4 can only talk to specific tablets and the Vita, and only lets you connect via gaming content. So anyone wanting to stream their videos and music from their home PC will have to wait. A curious omission.

EXPOSED!

4K AND OTHER GAMING FADS





Gamers are always looking for the next big thing, but how do we know when we've actually found it? In such a fast-moving industry, today's hot topics could be just another Guitar Hero controller in the attic by the end of the year – it's almost impossible to know what will take off. In a market swamped with more intriguing concepts and technobabble than ever before, **Play** calls out the so-called killer features that just aren't all they're cracked up to be...

4K

THE SUPER-RESOLUTION THAT SIMPLY DOESN'T MATTER... YET



There's a huge buzz right now around the shiny new 4K televisions that have been hitting the market recently, but here's the thing – you don't need

one. The improvement in resolution, while vast, simply isn't noticeable unless you've got your face smooshed up against a gigantic 4K display – just as the jump from 720p to 1080p isn't noticeable at all on anything under 32", you'd need to be inches away from an 80" screen to notice the leap from 1080p to 4K. This enhanced resolution is great for cinema screens and home projector setups, where the expense of quadrupling the pixel count can actually lead to a visible difference. But in the home, for most people, it's simply overkill.

It's clear for a number of reasons that 4K is more a marketing buzz term to sell expensive new TVs than it is a significant improvement that many of us need. For one thing, unlike other HD standards, there's not even a uniform resolution for 4K – both 3840x2160 and 4096x2160 resolutions are referred to as '4K', while the term itself breaks from the usual tradition of identifying by pixel height (as in the case of 720p and other standards) to instead use horizontal pixel count.

If you plan on getting a huge TV and have a lot of cash to throw at one, it might be worth looking at a 4K set. But for us, at least we can rest easy that our 1080p TVs aren't going to be obsolete any time soon. In any case, console gaming has only just begun to embrace 1080p as the norm – it'll be ages before games begin to fully support the resolution. Borderline pointless on all bar the largest sets and wildly undersupported? Yeah, we'll pass for now.

"4K IS MORE OF A MARKETING BUZZ TERM TO SELL EXPENSIVE NEW TELEVISIONS"



△OX□ The best thing about wearing one of these is that you can't see everyone else in the room laughing at you.

3D

TURNS OUT THAT ADDING DEPTH DOESN'T ACTUALLY ADD DEPTH



Remember the good old days when you used to be able to go to the cinema without having to slap on a pair of ridiculous cheap goggles? Yeah, good times. But while purpose-shot big-screen experiences can actually benefit from that extra dimension, the same simply isn't true of games.

It's a matter of direction. Movies can get around many of the issues of 3D by being specifically shot and directed to facilitate the illusion of immersion and depth. But with almost all games, that level of direction simply isn't possible – manual cameras and mobile characters mean that there are countless ways for the illusion to be shattered.

It's a matter of size. The 3D illusion only works on a screen big enough that it fills your entire field of vision. Otherwise, the second anything or anyone leaves the screen, it stops 'popping out' via that 3D magic and just disappears into thin air. On a bloody great Imax screen, that's not a problem. But at home, on a smaller screen, stuff is just going to keep on getting cut off and vanishing like this.

And it's a matter of technology. In order to pull off the 3D effect, a game needs to render twice as many frames. That means that games often have to have their resolution cut in order to hit the required doubled frame rate and since many developers seem to be struggling to get 60 frames out of the PS4 as it is, they're unlikely to be able to get 3D running without compromising on visuals in order to do so.

Finally, it adds nothing on a gameplay level. Even on 3DS, a handheld devoted to the gimmick, there are only a handful of games that so much as try to work the illusion of depth into gameplay and almost all fail. With Nintendo's revised handheld omitting the 3D functionality and just a single game in the PS4 launch line-up (*Trine 2*) supporting 3D, it's pretty clear that gaming's love affair with 3D is starting to wane, and we can't say that we'll miss it.

△OX□ If you've got fish swimming out of your monitor, it probably needs to go back to the shop. It's not meant to do that...



△OX□ What Sony thinks PlayStation Move is. In reality, it's just a way of playing *Flight Control HD* and *Dead Storm Pirates*.





MOTION CONTROL

WHY THE DUALSHOCK DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT

It was just too soon. That was the main thing that crippled the very idea of motion control replacing the long-serving controller – it simply wasn't good enough when it first rolled out. The Wii had novelty value but it quickly became clear that, like the EyeToy before it, the accuracy simply wasn't there to support games any more complex than the likes of *Wii Sports*. But of course, the Wii was everywhere for a bit and both Sony and Microsoft had to have a piece of that family-friendly pie – enter Move, the Wii Remote's elder brother with slightly better accuracy and many of the same problems and Kinect, a grown-up EyeToy that hackers and modders

“FOR THE 3D EFFECT, A GAME NEEDS TO RENDER TWICE AS MANY FRAMES”



ΔOXΔ SOMEBODY HELP THESE PEOPLE THEY ARE DROWNING. Oh wait, it's not real.

managed to get more out of than any of the full retail games ever did.

So now, even with Move's functionality built into every DualShock 4 and Kinect upgraded to do what it was originally supposed to do, people don't seem to care so much about having motion control that works. Developers have been stung before, producing games that chased those delicious Wii dollars only to get slammed at review and tumble straight into the bargain bin, so they're not falling over one another to put out the next *Rise Of Nightmares* or *Red Steel*. But perhaps that's a good thing – the tech is there now so that a team that wants to make a proper motion-controlled game can do so, but we won't be flooded with flappy-wavy-nonsense again for a while.

THE REAL ONES TO WATCH

A little look at some of the new gaming gimmicks actually worth caring about...



CLOUD GAMING

■ Anyone who has fiddled around with the new Remote Play connectivity between PS4 and Vita has seen a glimpse of the future, as too has anyone who got to enjoy Gaikai or OnLive since the streaming services started a few years back. Basically, it's playing games off a remote server, sending your inputs to a server where a game processes them and delivers the results as a video feed. You can play things that look way better than what the device you're running on should be capable of in this way, and on demand too. It'll be a few years before internet speeds are good enough to do it justice, but this will be huge.



VR/OCULUS RIFT

■ While 'traditional' stereoscopic 3D might not have made too much of a dent in the games market, this certainly might. The concept of a VR headset has been around for decades but only now are we at a point where the tech is there to make it a reality – like motion control since, VR got off to a terrible start with a host of awful pseudo-games and tech demos over the years. But now, with ex-id Software tech wizard John Carmack on board, a lightweight headset and the graphical grunt to make games and experiences that actually look real, virtual reality might just be on the verge of an explosive resurgence.

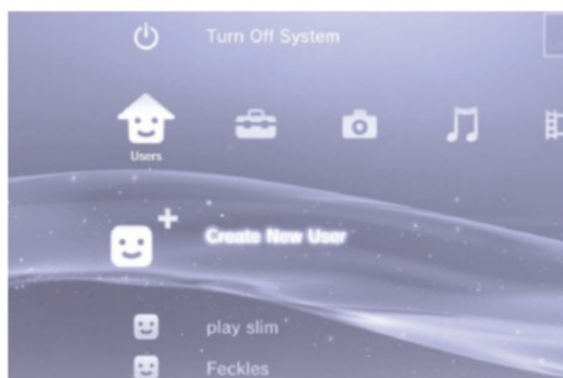


FREE-TO-PLAY

■ It gets a lot of bad press thanks to those awful money-grabbing games that do it so badly wrong but free-to-play is, in the right hands, a thing of wonder. Amazing games like *PlanetSide 2* prove that there's a market for triple-A quality games monetised purely by cosmetic enhancements – it's not all the kind of pay-to-win junk that stinks up the App Store and every other mobile equivalent. Even big franchises are getting in on the action now, with Namco Bandai leading the charge with *Tekken*, *SoulCalibur* and *Ridge Racer* all offering free versions. How long before *Call Of Duty* goes free-to-play, you ask? Don't hold your breath.

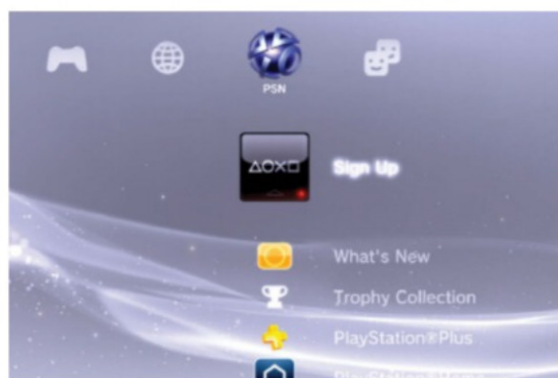
HOW TO... SET UP A JAPANESE PSN ACCOUNT

With the Japanese launch of the PS4 just around the corner, it seems likely that many import-curious gamers will want to see how the launch line-ups differ. Here's a step-by-step guide to setting up a Japanese PSN account



CREATE A NEW USER

1 From the main dashboard, start by creating a new profile. You might want to name it so that you remember it's your Japanese account if you have many profiles on your console already. This is a local identifier only, so it needn't be original or clever – only you will ever see this particular handle.



SELECT 'SIGN IN' ON THE PSN MENU

2 Time to sign in, although you don't actually have a PSN account yet. Choose to create a new account – you'll need an email address that isn't already tied to a PSN account, although you can just make one up if you're confident that you'll remember your password.

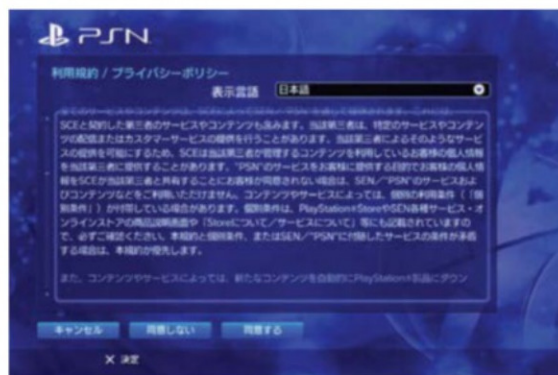


SET YOUR REGION TO 'JAPAN'

3 Time to bend the truth. Set your country of residence to Japan but before you do so, set your date of birth – the language will change to Japanese as soon as you set your region, so be ready. The top option is 'Country', the second 'Language' and the third is 'Date Of Birth'.

ADDING FUNDS GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME DIGITAL CASH

■ **AS WITH USING** a US account in Europe, you won't be able to add funds or buy anything (that isn't free, at least) with a credit or debit card from a region other than that of the account you're using. As such, you'll need to invest in PSN cash cards, which are sold by various reputable websites and individuals (as well as less reputable ones – shop around and try to get testimonials from friends or other internet dwellers about the best places to go for your imported cash). Once you've got your code, head to the usual Redeem Code link on the Store (don't let the language barrier put you off – the option is in the same place as on the domestic Store) and you'll be able to pick up anything you like up to the value you've added. Happy shopping!



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

4 Nobody reads these things anyway, so the fact that it's all in Japanese shouldn't change things all that much. Scroll all the way through the wall of text and select the far-right option of the three at the bottom to move onto the next part of the process.



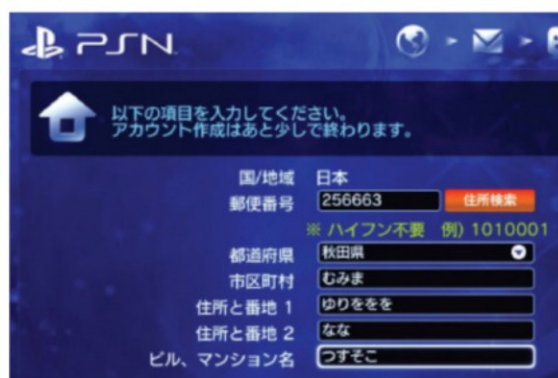
SELECT AN EMAIL/ PASSWORD COMBO

5 If you already use your only email address for your main PSN account, don't worry – you can just make one up. Stick the address and your password in twice, hit the tickbox (to remember the password) and pick the right-hand option at the bottom.



CREATE A PSN ID

6 Now enter your new online handle. The easiest thing to do to secure one that isn't already in use is just stick 'JPN' or something else on the end of your existing PSN ID. The far right option is 'Confirm' – if you're taken to an error screen, the name you've chosen is invalid, so just back out and try again.

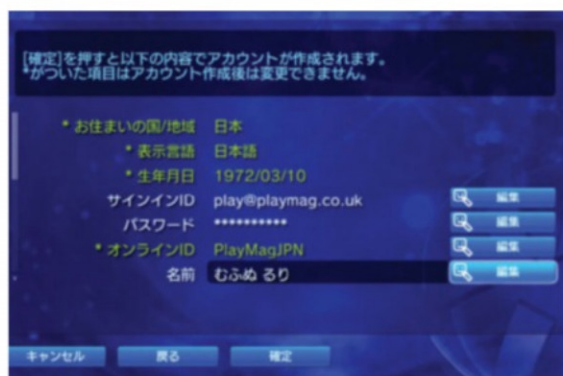


MAKE UP A NAME

7 The first two fields here are for your name (first and surname) and the third is for inputting your gender. Since these make absolutely no difference to anything on PSN, chuck in whatever you like into each of the boxes and hit the far-right option at the bottom again to move on.

MAKE UP AN ADDRESS

8 Same again, but this time you're fabricating an address. Use a real one if you like but these aren't checked, so it can be anything. The first is for number only, the drop-down menu below is for district and the remaining boxes can be filled in with anything. The right-hand button below completes the process.



CONFIRM YOUR DETAILS AND SIGN IN

9 Well, sort of. The last thing for you to do is to confirm your details. Remember to make a note of the ID, email and password in case your brain manages to lose any of them at a later date and hit that far-right button one last time. You're done!

HIT THE STORE

10 You should know where to find the Store by now, and even navigating it shouldn't be too much of a hassle if you already know your way around. There are loads of awesome things on the Japanese Store that you can't find anywhere else, so explore, enjoy and let us know what awesome goodies you get!

WHAT TO GET



RYU GA GOTOKU: ISHIN! (PS3/PS4)

Fair play to Sega for serving western fans of the *Yakuza* games with localised versions, but we'd love to see the team go a step further and bring us the spin-off games. Like *Kenzan!* before this, *Ishin!* takes the usual formula of the mob sim and throws it back in time, this time landing it smack in the middle of feudal Japan.



DRIVECLUB (PS4)

If Evolution's racer *does* end up making it onto the Japanese store around launch and before the rest of the world, you can always pick it up with your new account. Since it'll be free on PS Plus, you could just invest in a month's PS Plus on your Japanese account.



MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: BATTLE OPERATION (PS3)

This free-to-play online shooter is great fun and even better fan service for those who can't get enough of colourful robots, lasers and shouting. It is, however, a little stingy with how much it actually lets you play each day, limiting sessions to 30 minutes unless you throw a few Yen at it to extend your tour of duty.



HARMFUL PARK (PSONE)

Physical copies of games like this quirky old-school shooter change hands for hundreds of pounds, so the opportunity to pick them up for the price of a Happy Meal (or similar non-restaurant-specific meal and toy bundle) is welcome indeed.

TEN WORST PS3 GAMES

MOST PEOPLE WILL BE LOOKING BACK ON WHAT IS NOW THE LAST GENERATION WITH A WARM SMILE, FONDLY REMEMBERING HOURS OF GAMING AND SOME GREAT TITLES. NEVER FORGET, THOUGH, THAT ALONG WITH ALL THE GOOD STUFF WE SAW A HELL OF A LOT OF CRAP. HERE ARE THE WORST ACCORDING TO PLAY...



UNEARTHED: TRAIL OF IBN BATTUTA: EPISODE 1

We've played a lot of bilge in our time, but *Unerthed* takes the prize for being the single most terrible game we've experienced. The first game from Saudi studio Semaphore, *Unerthed* is a poor pastiche of *Uncharted* with nothing of what makes that game great. Literally everything in *Unerthed* is awful: animations, hit detection, sound effects, handling, voice acting, graphics... EVERYTHING. It's only an hour long, but it will feel like the longest hour of your life. Please believe us when we say, even if you are tempted, it's just not worth it. Stay away if you value your sanity.



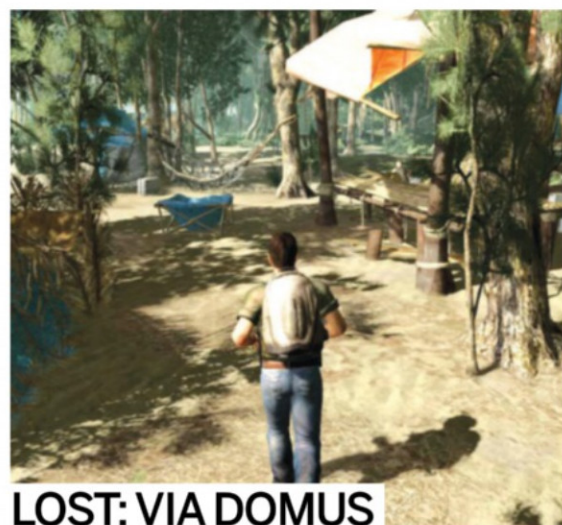
FAMILY GUY: BACK TO THE MULTIVERSE

As much as we enjoyed *Family Guy* back in the day, the series has lasted far longer than it should have, a pale imitation of the irreverent comedy of its first few seasons. This same sense of tiredness carries over to *Back To The Multiverse*, a game that is as fun as it is funny, which is to say, not at all. Humour that was once risqué and satirical has been replaced by stereotyping that will be offensive to many – oh, a world ruled by evil paraplegic/amish/gay people... Playing up to stereotypes without exploring them in a clever way is just dull, and the game itself is rubbish too.



AMY

Everyone knows that escort quests are, unequivocally, the worst part of any game that features them. So, how about a game where ALL OF IT is an escort quest? Sound fun? No? Hmmm. *Amy* is boring, broken, and most criminally for a horror game, not scary in the slightest. A few criticisms, like the utterly absurd checkpointing system forcing you to replay hours of gameplay, have been patched, but there's no fix for being terrible. To top off this cavalcade of shit, the game features unskippable cut-scenes; a mortal sin that should be met with scorn and shame.



LOST: VIA DOMUS

Another example of rubbish licensed games, *Lost* isn't the worst game on this list, but it's a perfect example of a game that is boring, janky and average at best; a complete waste of an opportunity to make a good adaptation. Opinions on the show aside, there was potential to make a good *Lost* game: a prequel perhaps, or an alternate take with different characters. In trying to tie the game into the show's plot, Ubisoft essentially neuters itself in creating an interesting storyline. What little gameplay exists is weak, and the voice acting is some of the worst we've heard.



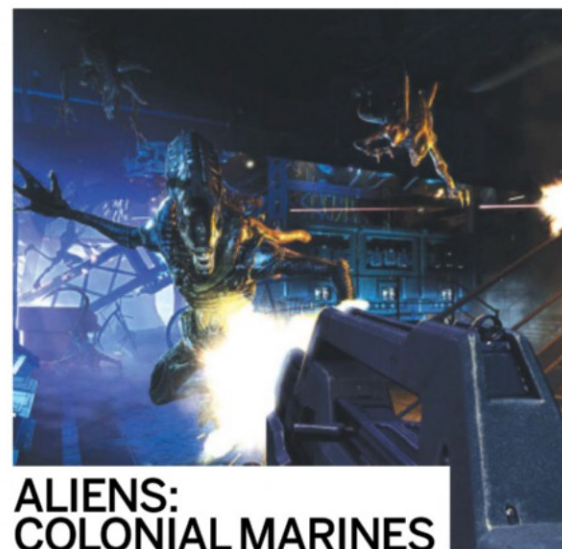
ROGUE WARRIOR

Oh, Mickey Rourke. You are better than this, this utterly insipid pile of human waste somehow given interactive form. *Rogue Warrior* was scrapped and restarted late in development, which left us with one of the most staggeringly bad games ever. It's front-to-back rubbish, most memorable for the hilariously obscene dialogue with Rourke managing to offend just about every race and minority as well as dropping about twenty F-bombs per minute. Still, all the potty language in the world can't cover for a game that is utter torture to play...



THE WALKING DEAD: SURVIVAL INSTINCT

We feel really, really sorry for anyone who received this game as a gift, hoping instead for Telltale's excellent and unrelated *The Walking Dead* game. This is a very different animal, a cheap, ugly tie-in that exemplifies the worst side of licensed games. Everything about *Survival Instinct* screams of a rushed development, from the PS2-level graphics to the terrible, bored voice acting from Norman Reedus and Michael Rooker. A great show deserves a great game, and this is not that. It's only about five hours long, but that's still five hours that you will never get back.



ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

Man, we really wanted this one to be good. There were a bunch of great *Alien* FPS games back in the day, and we so wanted a new one, but it wasn't to be. *Aliens: Colonial Marines* had an extremely troubled development, lasting years as it was shipped around various teams, unfinished and in bits and pieces. By all accounts, Gearbox wasn't happy with the final product that other studios delivered to it, but that doesn't absolve it of any of the considerable blame that needs dishing out. *Colonial Marines* feels like a game from 15 years ago, and a bad one at that.



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

It's been largely downhill for Sonic since the Mega Drive glory days, but *Sonic 2006* marks his lowest point. This is one of the buggiest games ever, utterly ruined top to bottom with glitches. The loading times are absurd, often waiting 30 seconds before delivering a single line of dialogue and then loading AGAIN for another half minute. The story is abysmal, including the infamous 'bestiality' scene featuring Sonic kissing a human princess. We don't know if Sonic Team will ever realise we hate every single pointless ancillary character, but Silver the Hedgehog is even worse than Shadow.



LAIR

Factor 5, rest its soul, made some great games back in the day, with its *Rogue Squadron* games on N64 and GameCube standing out. Coming off a string of great arcade flight sims, it's understandable that people were excited for *Lair*, a PS3 launch title which has you riding around on the back of a bloody great dragon. Unfortunately, someone decided that *Lair* should revolve around the then-new Sixaxis controller, tilting the pad to fly in different directions. Unsurprisingly, it didn't work. Like, at all. The game bombed and sadly, Factor 5 shut up shop soon after.



007 LEGENDS

James Bond has had a tough time of things, as far as games go. Since introducing FPS to console gamers with *GoldenEye*, things have gradually gotten worse, with Activision trying to find ways to bring Bond back to his old heights and failing repeatedly. After remaking *GoldenEye* didn't work, developer Eurocom decided to plunder Bond's past, creating a game comprised of missions from various films. Sounds like a good concept, right? Well, you'd be correct – the concept is great. Unfortunately, the execution is lacking, *Legends* amounting to little more than a crap *COD* clone.

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Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII

The world ends with you

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Square Enix

DEVELOPER
Square Enix

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
9.6 GB

AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@OfficialFFXIII

Trophies 43



WE'RE NOT SURE

there's another title in all of gaming that has attracted quite the levels of vitriol and abuse that *Final Fantasy XIII* did. In a clear attempt to broaden the JRPG spectrum and make the franchise more international, Square Enix took many a liberty with structure, narrative and mechanics – with the gaming world full of people who spent their formative years with *FF* leads from Terra to Tidus across a string of Squaresoft JRPGs, this change of direction didn't go down so well.

Okay, so that's this issue's most obvious understatement – based on the backlash, you'd have thought that Square made house calls to every single *FF* fan to set fire to their mint copies of *FFVII*, inject their cats with bleach then piss in their beds before flying off to the next house like some kind of bastard Santa. But no, Square did none of that. Obviously. Square didn't ruin your childhood.

Square didn't violate your memories. Square just made a game. Those old ones? They're still good, and you can still play them. *XIII* was just an experiment, an attempt to do something new. Love it or hate it, it certainly met that brief.

It was great to see Square respond to criticisms of the original in the design of sequel *XIII-2*, but *Lightning Returns* takes this crazy experiment to its illogical conclusion – an action-RPG where you control just one character at the end of the world. While the game is set up to be playable without any prior knowledge of *XIII* or *XIII-2* (and even having played both through twice, we'd still struggle to tell you what actually happened in them), it's clearly aimed squarely at giving closure to those that enjoyed them rather than trying to convert the haters. It's the right choice – the game box could have been filled with

Thunder+

△×□ This brute first shows up as a boss, but soon becomes a regular enemy.

2 OVERCLOCK 2 EP

Rage


Cyclops

1680 




Electronica

086 / 120

Flamesparka 

2416

Firestorm 

Thund 

Icespark 



money and cookies and the hate squad would still have bitched about it, after all.

So here we are at the end of the world – leave everything you know about RPGs at the door because there's an argument to be made for Lightning's latest not even being an RPG at all. Sure, it has stats and all the usual RPG trimmings. But with no traditional experience mechanic and a combat system that feels more like a hardcore action game, this is worlds away from the wait-your-turn standard grind of traditional JRPGs. It's quite telling that Square has elected to fiddle with the order of the title – this isn't *XIII-3*, but an action spin-off that just happens to tie up the ludicrous story of two previous RPGs. It does a fair job of that too, in so much as it offers some reasoning for the events of this and the previous games. Does it make sense? Does it hell, but we don't see how it could have come much closer with what it had to tie up.

The new action slant would be a waste of time if the mechanics weren't up to scratch, and surprisingly – given that Square is so well versed in turn-based games designed not to feel turn-based – they're rock solid. Things start out simple, with just a couple of commands assigned to the face buttons but there's a lot more to it than it first appears. Every attack can be 'just framed' by timing the attack string perfectly, but it's an advanced technique and it'll take some time to get used to. We spent ages holding attack buttons down and got into bad habits, but if you start working on your timing early on, you should have an advantage by the time the end-game rolls around.

With three outfits switchable on the fly akin to *XIII*'s Paradigm system, just picking the right skills to fill up each is an adventure in its own right. Some offer passive boosts and stat growth, others are simply powerful abilities with no other benefits, and juggling both to create three good sets that work well together is quite

△○×□ Some enemies must be avoided until you've improved your stats and gear.



PLAY VIDEO

Watch the review on our YouTube channel or your free disc, with team commentary.

YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK



△○×□ Yeah, Lightning has a tail now. We did that – since the option is there, why not?

the challenge. You can move freely in a fight, but with Lightning's movement so strangely sluggish in the heat of battle, it's far better to use abilities to position yourself – many melee attacks send her running towards the target, while some spells allow her to flip away from them, so there's potential to use these tactically as well as offensively. You'll want to get some defensive options in there too, since many enemies have at least one way of hitting crazy hard and blocking or dodging with an ability is the only way to mitigate damage and conserve items.



△○×□ Spotting and targeting weaknesses is crucial in battle...



It's a really good battle system once you get a proper feel for the flow of it, with the ability to 'easy mode' your way through it just by equipping strong moves and holding down buttons but also genuine depth – the fact that there are already combo videos and technical demonstrations up on YouTube based on the Japanese version should reinforce the fact that the complexity is there if you want it. There are some neat interactions between various Garbs and weapons too, allowing for gimmick-based setups designed to turn middling outfits into great ones. Even though there's not a huge amount of strategy to the battles themselves, a hell of a lot of thought needs to go into the prep work.



This creativity isn't limited to the battle system, either. The entire world is explorable pretty much from the off and while there's a fairly obvious recommended order in which to tackle story missions, it's merely a guideline – if you fancy a challenge, you can mix things up to your heart's desire. This is made even more interesting by the passage of time, with the clock ticking away the world's last fortnight and the world changing and reacting according to the time of day. Shops open and close at times that will prove typically inconvenient, the shopkeep always seeming to clock off just when you need them the most; NPCs go about their business and various characters only come out to play at certain times; even the stuff you'll find and can do will change from morning to noon to night.

It goes even further as well, with each passing day changing up your options. An early quest-giver might die or leave if you go to look for them at a later date, for instance, while shops gradually improve their gear to make up for the fact that enemies get slowly tougher as the end of the world draws ever closer. Some quests are time-based and need to be completed quickly, while other can be failed outright if you don't meet their conditions or do them wrong. The whole mechanic makes the game extremely

interesting and raises the pressure immensely – Square Enix's intention was clearly to instill a little end-of-the-world panic in the player and it works perfectly.

In this messed-up world where no new life can be introduced, there are a finite amount of monsters left to stand in Lightning's way and this leads to another brilliant new mechanic – extinction. Hunt enough critters and their numbers will dwindle, encounters with them becoming increasingly rare until you're confronted with the Last One. You might think that the last remaining creature from a species would be a bedraggled, depressed mess but you'd be wrong – by apparently absorbing the life energy of all of their fallen brothers and sisters, they grow ridiculously tough and glow purple for some reason. Wipe out this Omega creature and that's it for the entire species, meaning you can wave goodbye to their rare drops but they'll never get in your way again. You can hunt these guys down later in the game in order to score their best loot if you like, but they'll be far more difficult to defeat if you do. It's a tricky balance to strike, but you'll be wiping entire species off the planet right up until the last day of the world anyway – just do your best and hope that it's enough.

There's a whiff of *Dead Rising* about how Square Enix handles New Game+



“SQUARE ENIX'S INTENTION WAS CLEARLY TO INSTILL A LITTLE END-OF-THE-WORLD PANIC IN THE PLAYER”



△OX□ AOE spells cost more ATB but can smash dense groups of enemies...



△OX□ Chocolina: still as annoyingly chirpy as ever.

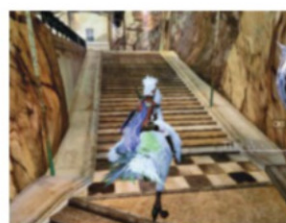


here, and given that pretty much nobody seemed to understand the logic behind it then, it's unlikely to get much love in a game that it's apparently cool to hate. Fail in your mission and you're whisked back to the start of the game, your gear and stats intact but the plot reset. While it might seem like a chore, the boosts offered by even a horrible failure of a world-saving attempt are immediately apparent and armed with increased stats, better gear and better knowledge of the game, missions and mechanics, subsequent runs are likely to go a whole lot better. As in *Dead Rising*, expect much complaining about how it makes you do

so much of the game again, but that's sort of the point – you learn, you grow and then you try to save the world one more time.

There's a *DmC* comparison to be made here as well, since we imagine many criticisms that will be levelled at *Lightning Returns* will stem from the title – just as *Ninja Theory's* action game would probably have got a lot more love if it hadn't been called *Devil May Cry*, the inventive mechanics and great combat on display here would go down way better if the game weren't tied to both the biggest name in RPG gaming and the vilified *XIII*. As a game taken on its own merits, it's really quite good and while it's not going to put toys back into prams or erase any of the wall of text hateblogs out there, it's strong enough on a gameplay level to warrant recommendation to anyone who isn't seeking out new ways to express their hatred for *FFXIII*.

The target audience for this is an odd topic. While many of the twists, turns, revelations and features are nods to things that happened in *XIII* and *XIII-2* (as well as other *Final Fantasy* games), there's also a surprising amount of exposition about past events which will likely bore anyone who saw it all play out for themselves. We get that it's a hard balance to strike but even so, there have to be better ways to do it than just have Hope ramble on about things that you either know already or have no interest in,



since the trivial details the annoying little brat seems so fond of remembering out loud have little bearing on what plays out.

Surprisingly, the shift to an open world hasn't had too much of a negative impact on the visuals. Each area is about the size of *XIII's* Gran Pulse, with all kinds of nooks and crannies to explore and, while a lot of the world's smaller details might look a bit ropey (including a dog that seems to have snuck in from a PS2 game), characters and main areas are beautiful. Production values in general are as insanely high as usual, the solid voice cast from the previous games (and Vanille) reprising their roles over what must be the most eclectic soundtrack we've heard in a game in years. Some is reused from the previous games but most is new, and a particular favourite is the lounge jazz





PLAY CHALLENGE



ΔOXO The game gets tricky enough in the later stages even without self-imposed restrictions, but sure, knock yourself out with these...

SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...



IN THE WASH

Can you go the full 13 days without changing out of your starting clothes? Also, what is that strange smell?



SANDY START

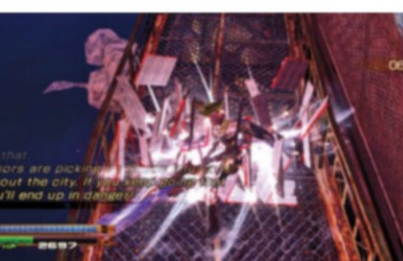
We dare you to tackle the Dead Dunes story mission before any of the others. Let us know how that goes...

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

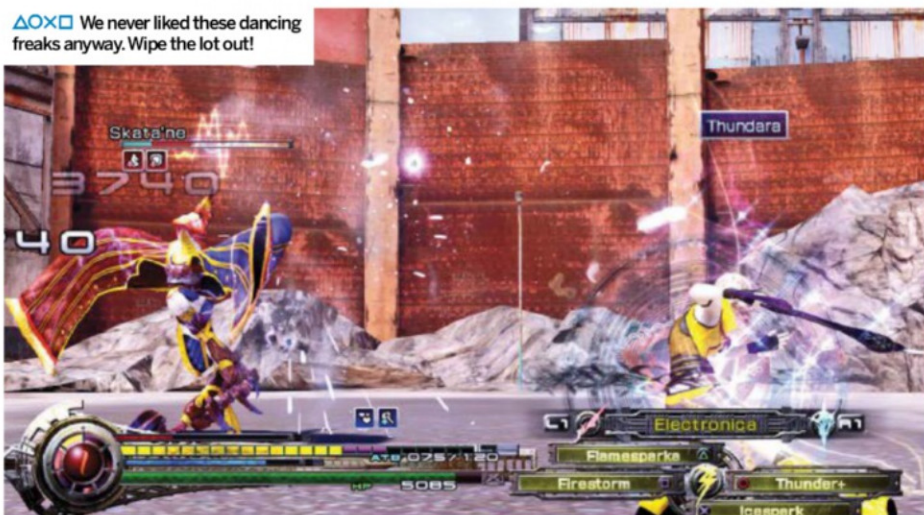


chocobo theme, which we like to think is a middle finger salute to those that complained about the metal chocobo tune in *XIII-2*. Is this better, guys? IS THIS BETTER? Well played, Square.

On closer inspection, there's an element of that mentality that permeates the entirety of *Lightning Returns*. Thought *XIII* was too radical a departure from previous games? NOW IT'S AN ACTION GAME LOL. Didn't like the characters? LET'S BRING EVERYONE BACK AND HAVE THEM ALL TALK LOTS ROFL. Even the novel structure comes across as a direct and blunt rebuttal of all those 'playable corridor' jokes that *XIII* was the butt of, laying out multiple huge areas to explore freely but with the wicked twist of a harsh time limit. Square seems to have



ΔOXO We never liked these dancing freaks anyway. Wipe the lot out!



ΔOXO Managing your wardrobe is essential and, thankfully, pretty easy.



he made for magic attacks, forged from steel. Rank: (Good)



realised that those of us who enjoyed *XIII* and its sequel want to see more of both this world and the level of innovation on display across the two games, and that's exactly what *Lightning Returns* delivers.

There are many reasons to dislike *Lightning Returns*. To hate it, even. Its heritage, its characters, its time limit, its structure, its story... it's unlikely that many people who play it will end up enjoying all of them. But the important thing is that we look at and appraise

decision to make something for the fans. In any case, you need look no further than the *Kingdom Hearts* series to see that Square does fan service pretty well.

And as a game for *XIII*'s downtrodden fans, *Lightning Returns* is excellent. It fleshes out the world, gives each of the cast a little more screen time without singling any out as more or less important (well, except Lightning) and brings a stupid story to a stupid conclusion in style. And the haters?

"THERE ARE ALREADY COMBO VIDEOS AND TECHNICAL DEMOS UP ON YOUTUBE"

what's actually there based on who it's aimed at rather than what we'd like the game to be. Square's goal was simply to cap off this much-hated chapter of *Final Fantasy* with another sideways look at what an RPG can and should be – exactly the approach that caused this chapter to attract so much bile in the first place. A bold move but, again, it's the right one and as the third part of a trilogy, it'd be somewhat stupid to begrudge Square its

They're gonna hate, clearly. That's kind of their thing. But this isn't a game for them. No, it's a reward for those bold enough to be of the apparently controversial opinion that *FFXIII* wasn't awful. And a fine reward it is too, so long as you don't go into it expecting a traditional *Final Fantasy* experience. And hey, if you don't like it, no worries – the angry mob is always hiring.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

More action than RPG, *Lightning Returns* is full of great ideas but unlikely to appeal to anyone that doesn't like this universe. A divisive finale to gaming's most hated trilogy, but we loved it.

80%

Lightning Returns Primer

Ten essential tips and tricks to help you cope with the end of the world

DON'T FEAR THE REAPER

There's a fair chance that you simply won't be able to power up enough to save the world on your first attempt, but fear not – if you fail to make it to the end, you'll be able to start a New Game+ run with all the stats and most of the gear accrued previously. This makes it significantly easier and you can skip cut-scenes you've already seen, so it shouldn't even take that long to get back to where you were, only far more powerful.



TIMING IS EVERYTHING

While the concept of perfect guarding is explained when blocking is first introduced, what the game fails to tell you is that the same applies to every kind of attack as well. The timing is tough but you'll get bonus damage and Stagger for doing so, so it's always worth doing. You get a flash and a chime when you get it right, so use this to help learn the right timing.



KILL 'EM ALL

One of *Lightning Returns*' most interesting mechanics is the ability to hunt most species to extinction, but it never really explains this. There's a finite amount of each creature in the world – kill enough of them and the Last One will spawn. These guys drop great gear and help thin out encounters, so try to make a dent in their numbers as early as possible.



USE EP SPARINGLY

Lightning's EP gauge is almost as valuable as time itself. While it can be used to heal or deal damage, we'd suggest potions and patience instead – the most efficient use of EP is to use Chronostasis often to hold back the hands of time for a while. Each area's more powerful enemies usually yield 2EP on defeat as well, so use this (and easy Chaos area monsters) to help prolong each day.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Annoyingly, abilities are woven right into each of Lightning's outfits, meaning that some of the best-looking ones aren't practical. Still, if you don't mind looking ridiculous, the key is to find three that work well together – magic, melee and status/tank seems to do well, though there are some great Garbs later on that work well together. Have a fiddle, find a trio you like and don't be afraid to change things up – you can always go back, after all.



THREAT LEVEL RISING...

As of the seventh day, enemies will start to get harder. The process is pretty slow but noticeable, particularly on the big guys and Last Ones. The upside is that they drop significantly better loot as you edge closer to the end. Unless you're after their top-end gear, take Last Ones out as soon as possible to avoid getting thrashed. This applies to some bosses as well.



TO PAY THE BILLS

When upgrading skills, it's important to know what you're aiming for. Raising the levels of abilities can increase power and reduce costs, but looted ones that come at a higher level will have better stats – try fusing the two. While stat boosts are nice, you'll want to cover as many elements as possible, plus you'll want a defensive ability on at least one of your outfits.

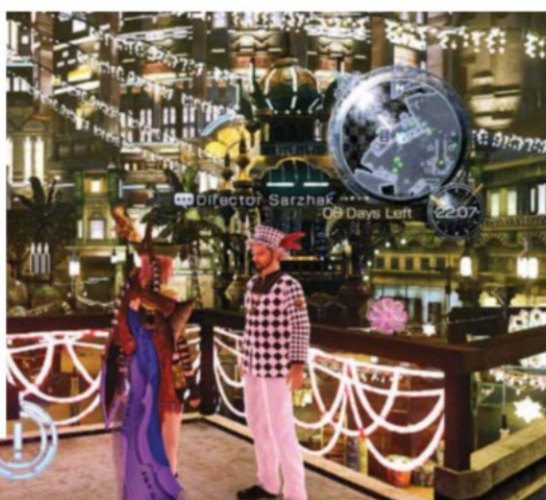


RINGS AND THINGS

Head accessories (those marked with an earring icon) only modify the Schemata they're applied to directly, but rings (or whatever they are – the second accessory) carry their effects over to all three active costumes. Since most of these are protective, this lets you stack debuff protection (up to three different kinds) or other perks, although the Tithed abilities – which sacrifice HP for auto-buffs – don't seem to stack. Which is probably just as well, actually.

STAY ON TRACK

A lot of the main quests involve being in a certain place at a certain time, so avoid getting too far away from where you need to be – the last thing you want to do is find yourself unable to get back in time to trigger the event and effectively lose a day. If you need to pass some time, a train ride between all the main stations can kill a few hours, and you can check the request board at each stop, too.



SELL YOUR JUNK

Medals exist purely for selling, and you'll likely find a lot of them. If you're in need of extra cash, head to the Dead Dunes. A kid in Ruffian asks you to find something for him, which turns out to be an appraising glass – when you've returned it, sweep the shrines for Unappraised Items and return to him with them. They usually turn out to be medals that will sell for a small fortune.



Minecraft: PS3 Edition

It's kind of a big deal



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Mojang

DEVELOPER

4J

PRICE

£12.99

PLAYERS

1-4

AGE RATING

7+

INSTALL SIZE

86 Mb

TWITTER

@4JStudios

Trophies 29



SO IT'S PRETTY unlikely that at this point you haven't heard of *Minecraft*. The retro-style block-

based open world adventure is one of the most successful indie games ever. At this point in the game's life, it's impossible as a gamer not to know what Creepers are, that diamonds are a Minecrafters' best friend, and that hell is one Nether Portal away. The question, then, is whether it all works on a PS3.

Minecraft on consoles is inevitably missing some of the sense of community compared to the PC version. The modding and sharing aspect of the game is obviously part of the reason why it's been so popular, and that's just not present here. However, there have been some welcome tweaks, like item-crafting being simplified so you don't have to do all that faffing about individually clicking on components. While it feels like a slightly different game, perhaps one a little more solitary, it's no worse for it.

It's classic *Minecraft*; half survival-horror, half destructive/creative sandbox, completely familiar to those that have played it before – and we're glad about that. You start with a lowly mix of a few random bits and pieces, including a rather useful map, and while you'll likely begin the game punching trees and cobbling together a weird, grubby little shelter to survive the night, ultimately

you'll be creating your own story in this 8-bit inspired, lively world. And that's exactly what we want from *Minecraft*.

It's a sandbox game, and as such it has all the pitfalls of an open world as well as the positives. While it's easy at first to be either overwhelmed with the amount of options you have, or just not be able to see the potential of the world around you, your time in *Minecraft* is basically as engaging and exciting as you want it to be. While there is a quest of sorts to be found in finding and defeating the Ender Dragon, you'll find that there's a lot of fun to be had in destroying and rebuilding the world as you see fit. It's simply an

excellent open-world game. You can be an explorer, a spelunker, a warrior, and though it might take you a little time to figure out exactly how you want to play, it's more open than it first seems when you begin. You can settle down peacefully and build yourself a working farm, or craft the sturdiest of weapons and set out to do some monster-hunting, or carve out your own apocalyptic scenario in which you take up residence inside a mountain, taking down spiders and gnawing on raw meat like Gollum.

The controls are sometimes a little floaty, though deliberately so, and when you're panicking to get away from



PLAY VIDEO

Watch the review on our YouTube channel or your free disc, with team commentary.

YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK





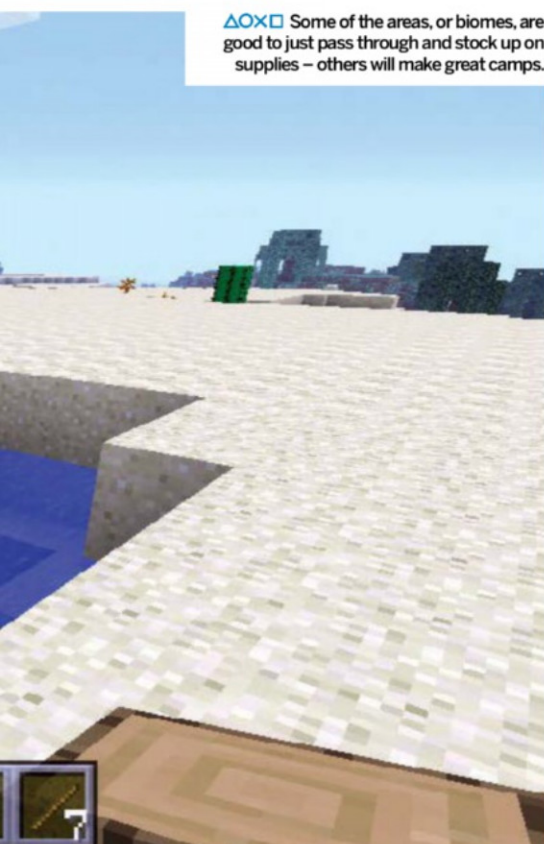
ΔOX□ If you find a pocket of lava, it's useful to set up camp near it as you can mould obsidian, stone and cobblestone with it.



ΔOX□ Naturally occurring villages can be great. It's up to you whether you befriend the people or steal their shit, though.



ΔOX□ Some of the areas, or biomes, are good to just pass through and stock up on supplies – others will make great camps.



“IT’S EASY TO LOOK AT ONE ASPECT OF MINECRAFT AND SCOFF AT ITS SIMPLICITY”

something that’s just snarled “Rargh” in the darkness at you, that can be just a tad frustrating. Particularly when it means all your possessions are now down in the depths where you died. There’s barely any time between the hiss of a Creeper that sees you and its inevitable explosion, so chances are you will die a fair bit if you’re more of the night-time adventurer type, braving the nocturnal beasts rather than constructing a fortress to keep them out.

But it’s partly this element of occasional unfairness that makes *Minecraft* so addictive, reinforcing that one-more-go mentality. ‘Maybe this time I’ll lure them into one of my traps’, you think, or maybe ‘I’ll climb a tree and pick them off one by one. Bastards aren’t gonna get me again...’ And then they do, but you get better and you find more materials to make better weapons, and slowly but surely you become something to be feared. Instead of your character levelling up, it’s you the player who learns how to make new combinations of item, what works best



TROPHY CABINET

DELICIOUS FISH Catch and cook a fish. You’ll need some string from dead spiders to make a rod, though. Gross.



DIAMONDS! Head deep into the earth with your iron pickaxe (as other kinds won’t work) and mine yourself some shiny diamonds.

against different enemies, where to find what you need to finish off your shining golden dick castle. Everybody makes a dick castle, it’s written into the rules.

It’s easy to look at one aspect of *Minecraft* and scoff at its simplicity, especially now it’s so popular, but there’s just so much here to play with. It’s the choice and variety that we love. Scratch the surface and your world will shape itself around the idea of what you want from a game. If that grabs you, it’ll be countless hours before you can drag yourself away.

Rebecca Richards

VERDICT

It’s the excellent game it always has been, with as much to get out of it as you’re willing to put in. If you’ve not played it then it’s well worth grabbing a pickaxe and getting involved.

91%

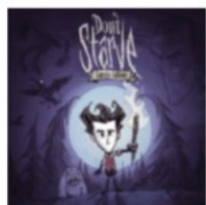
OR YOU COULD TRY

▲ **TERRARIA** An addictive 2D sandbox adventure. *Terraria* is perfect for those that want a break from *Minecraft*.



Don't Starve

Shave the last human



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Klei Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Klei Entertainment

RELEASE DATE
Out now

PRICE
£11.99 (free on PS Plus)

PLAYERS
1

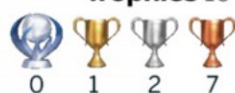
GENRE
Survival roguelike

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@klei

INSTALL SIZE
250 Mb

Trophies 10



WITH TRIPLE-A GAMES

trying harder and harder to impress with every passing day, you could

perhaps argue that the level of bombast seen in their plots and goals has reached a point where the impressive simply isn't that impressive any more. We've foiled countless terrorist plots over the years, saved the world, the universe, the galaxy and everything else more times than we care to remember and become the best in the world at just about every sport going. So what's left to do? According to the indies, the answer is to dial back that spectacle and simplify things, which leaves you with things like this – an experience so simple that it has been explained perfectly before you've even left the title screen.

Yes, *Don't Starve* is every bit as simple as its no-nonsense moniker would have you believe, at least in principle. Dropped into a horrible demon world, Wilson (and later his curious friends, all of whom have unique abilities and traits)

is tasked simply with staying alive, with health, hunger and sanity gauges to juggle in this ultimately futile endeavour – it's like *The Sims* in that respect, only with permadeath and quite a few more hostiles. Ironically, despite the title, starvation is pretty much the one thing in the game that *hasn't* killed us yet. Which we think makes us winners. Hooray.

The real joy of the game comes from learning how every aspect of the initially alien environment works over the course of multiple games. As in *Dark Souls*, you should expect to learn through dying – while nothing here is cheap per se, there are plenty of tricks, traps and nasty surprises that will catch rookies off-guard and present many a life-or-death situation as you learn the ropes.

The world is randomly generated upon starting the game, meaning you never know what to expect. One run could drop you in a land rich in resources but with precious little to eat, while the next might turn the tables and see you drowning in carrots

and berries but unable to find even a single gold nugget for love nor money. And you'll want that nugget, too – it's among the essential kit you'll need to round up in the early stages of a run, along with a couple of meals, a few flints and saplings for basic tools and enough grass to start a modest fire to keep the deadly darkness of night from claiming you before even a single day has passed. A gold nugget might seem like an odd thing to need, but it's a crucial ingredient in making the Science Machine, a useful device which, like *Minecraft*'s Crafting Table, significantly expands your crafting options beyond the basics. Once 'prototyped' (read: created once with the Science Machine), more advanced gear can be made without the contraption, making prototyping essential to the early stages of any good run.

For all its random generation and one-off events, the first few days of *Don't Starve* always play out much the same. In a game where death is always



△○×□ Not all 'enemies' are hostile, and many can be played off against one another if you know what you're doing.



△○×□ Wilson grows a mean beard over time, offering protection from cold weather and a little sanity boost when you come to shave it off.



ΔOX□ Fire immunity and a sanity boost around burning things make Willow, the first unlockable character, a great beginner's choice.



PLAY VIDEO

Watch the review on our YouTube channel or your free disc, with team commentary.

YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

ΔOX□ Trust us when we say that you'll really want to find a herd of these guys. You'll see why...

just around the corner, that's not a good thing and unless you get incredibly lucky with your world layout, the first half an hour or so of each game will follow pretty much the same pattern. It does mean that you'll get really damn good at that initial loop pretty quickly, sure, but you'll often find yourself wishing you could skip it and just jump into the game

is a gateway to Adventure mode, a five-stage game-within-a-game where you'll be tested in your ability to understand and manipulate the game world across a series of increasingly (and arguably excessively) harsh challenge maps. This is as close to story or structure as the game ever really ventures, not that many people will see it though. Or

"WHILE NOTHING HERE IS CHEAP PER SE, THERE ARE PLENTY OF TRICKS, TRAPS AND NASTY SURPRISES"

proper. Once you establish a camp and start setting up farms, you can work towards becoming self-sufficient and living off your own patch – in fact, having a good camp in the right place can easily be the difference between a seven-day run and a 70-day run, as long as you're prepared for the seasonal changes that winter brings.

There's more to it than simply postponing the inevitable, too. Hidden away somewhere in the massive world

indeed find it at all – we've only stumbled across the gate a handful of times across hundreds of runs, but can confirm that it's really bloody tough on the other side. Thankfully, failure here punts you back into your own world sans punishment, although that's just about the only instance in which failure isn't met with a swift punt back to the title screen.

While the wonderful art style isn't exactly pushing the PS4's technical abilities, that's not the point – *Don't*



Starve is a gateway roguelike which, thanks to PS Plus, will offer a first taste of the 'genre' (or, more specifically, game style) to gamers before the likes of *The Binding Of Isaac* and *Rogue Legacy* arrive. And it's really good too, even if there's slightly too much luck involved in whether a run will come good or not. If the idea of indefinite sessions of simply trying not to die clicks with you, expect to lose many an hour to keeping three little bars topped up. And if not, don't worry – roguelikes by their very nature aren't for everyone and we fully understand that some people simply won't be able to enjoy a game where death is inevitable and all you can do is delay it by a single horrible day at a time.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Gloomy, tricky and endlessly punishing, *Don't Starve* makes eking out an existence in a cruel world as entertaining as it is ever likely to be. Just don't expect to do very well.

81%



The Walking Dead Season Two Episode 1: All That Remains

Long live Clementine



THE FORMAT AND

means of interaction might be the same, but the themes and

overtones set up in *All That Remains* – this first episode of *The Walking Dead Season Two* – are very different to those examined in *Season One*. Playing as Lee in the first year's worth of episodes put us in the role of mentor, protector and father-figure – our job being to make sure the young and innocent Clementine was safe until a time in which she's able to fend for herself in the face of the zombie onslaught.

In *Season Two*, such a time has come. Clementine, who you now control directly, is no longer the victim. She's tougher, she's outspoken and is more attuned to the ways of the violent world

she's struggling to survive in. Innocence has been lost. At the very least, it has been outgrown – Clementine's now a child in age alone.

Strong female protagonists are not new to the world of videogames, of course, but given her age and her character arc over previous episodes, Clementine's role and personality are legitimately engaging. This is a young girl adept at handling herself and taking the initiative in difficult situations, and yet she never feels anything less than vulnerable within the unstable and unpredictable nature of her reality. The result is a genuinely intriguing and believable character that you can't help but feel more than a superficial swell of parental emotion towards, especially now, in the absence of Lee.

The fact that the vast majority of the supporting cast are entirely new to the story means that Clementine is front and centre of the narrative at all times, a tactic clearly designed to set up the themes of isolation and suspicion that will presumably permeate the entire season. That sense of being alone, even when in the presence of this season's new characters, will be magnified intensely for those that have played through the whole of the first season. Given that, there's no way we can recommend you start *All That Remains* until you're fully up-to-date with the events that precede it.

While none of your dialogue/plot decisions explicitly carry over from the first season, your understanding of Clementine and her past

DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Telltale Games

DEVELOPER

Telltale Games

PRICE

£3.99

(Season Pass – £14.99)

PLAYERS

1

AGE RATING

18+

INSTALL SIZE

740MB

TWITTER

@TelltaleGames

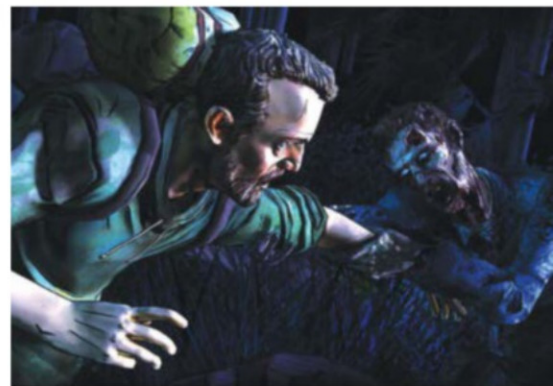
Trophies 8



△×□ Being alone, Clementine has plenty of opportunity to reflect on relationships from the first season.



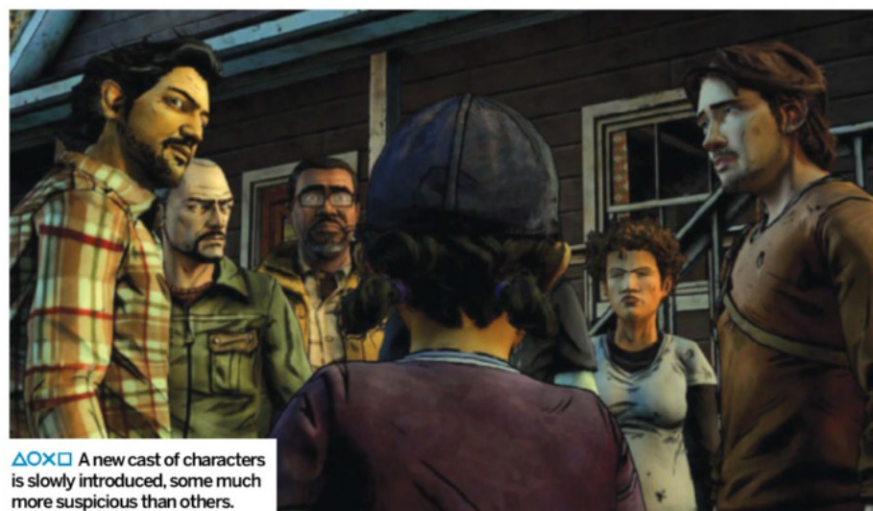
△×□ It's as gruesome as ever, and yet Clem has become more used to her surroundings.



relationships add a great deal of weight and significance to plot, setting and character. Clementine has been through a lot to get here, and missing out on that would be a big mistake.

It speaks volumes about the strength of the writing that the world feels like

re-introduced in a role that feels entirely in keeping with the reality of her world, the new characters are interesting both in isolation and as a group and the touching upon of previous characters provides a sense of scale and history that adds to the legitimacy of the story.



△×□ A new cast of characters is slowly introduced, some much more suspicious than others.

“ARGUABLY THE DARKEST AND MOST FOREBODING OF ANY OF THE WALKING DEAD EPISODES TO DATE”

such a haunting and terrible place without ever devolving into cheap scares or shock horror visuals for the sake of effect. Clementine doesn't physically go through anything worse than what you'd see in *Tomb Raider* or *Resident Evil*, but the mental turmoil is plain to see and gives you much more to ponder and worry about. Due to this, *All That Remains* is arguably the darkest and most foreboding of any of *The Walking Dead* episodes to date and, frankly, leaves us somewhat afraid of what is in store for its leading lady.

Just how well/realistically Clementine reacts to these pressures over the long-term will go a long way to determining how impactful this season is.

In typically expert fashion, Telltale has done well to pack in as much as it has over the episode's (roughly) two-hour running time. Clementine has been

We couldn't have hoped for a better return for a game that has become one of the most talked about franchises of the past few years. Telltale set the bar extremely high when it put us in control of Lee, and that level shows no sign of dipping with us in charge of Clementine.

Clementine's world is full of horror and carnage, but there's no place we'd rather be and no set of eyes we'd rather see it through.

John Robertson

VERDICT

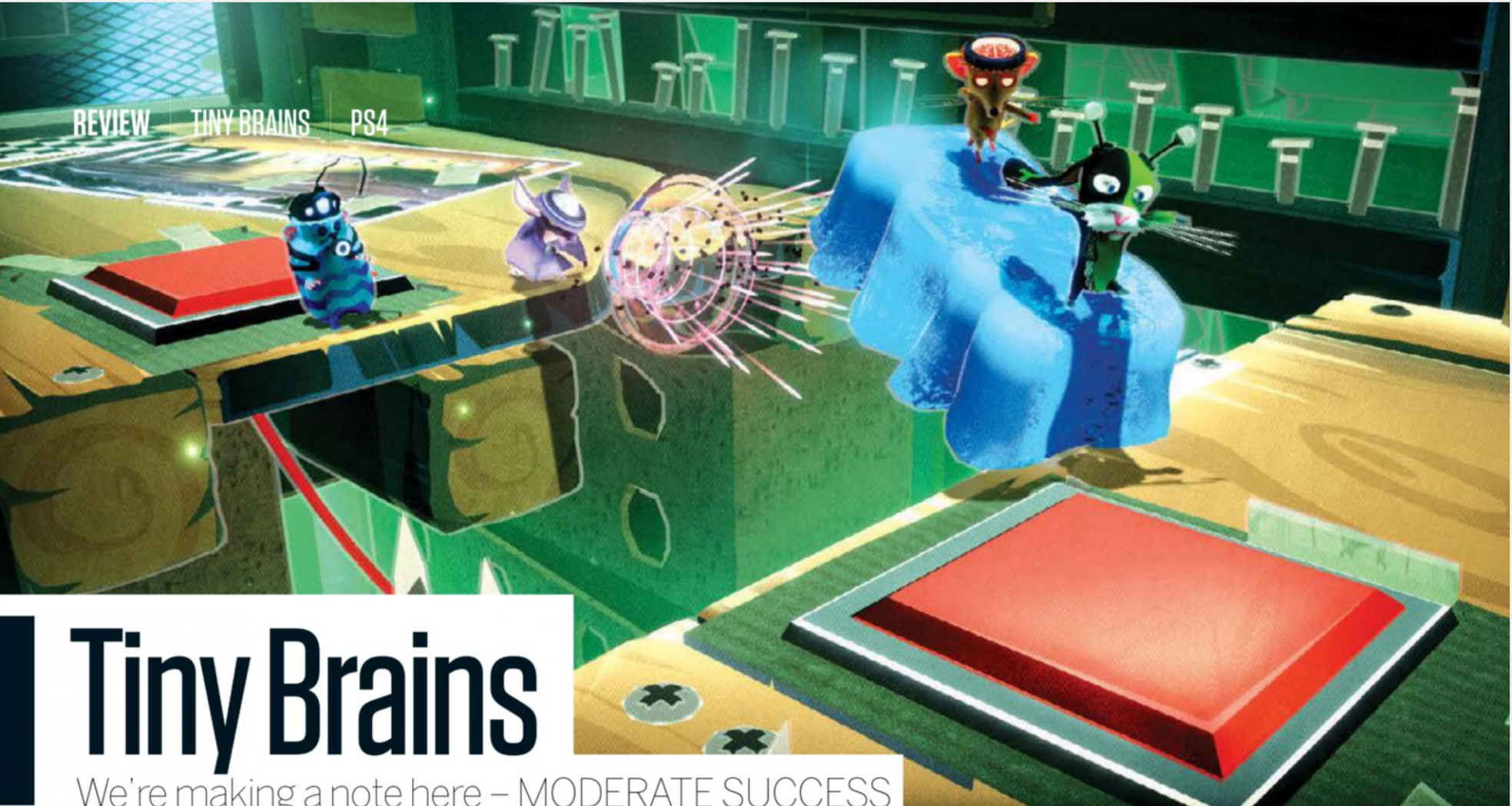
By putting you in control of Clem, Telltale has brought a different focus to a familiar world. Every bit as engrossing as before, *Season Two* could hardly have begun in better fashion.

89%



△×□ Largely alone, Clementine must now fend for herself in the face of difficult odds.





Tiny Brains

We're making a note here – MODERATE SUCCESS



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
505 Games

DEVELOPER
Spearhead Games

RELEASE DATE
Out now

PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1-4

GENRE
Puzzle

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@TinyBrainsGame

INSTALL SIZE
1.2 GB

Trophies 12



PEOPLE SAY THAT co-op makes every game better, but that simply isn't true. Get paired up with the wrong teammate and even

the best cooperative experience can fall flat on its face – one weak link in a team in *FFXIV*, for instance, can spell doom for the entire party in the tougher dungeons, while an overeager longsword user in *Monster Hunter* can do more harm than good if their swipes end up interrupting the attacks of others. Even seemingly foolproof experiences like *FIFA* fall foul of this, as you'll know if you've ever found yourself screaming at a partner for a pass while in acres of space only to watch them greedily run straight into a tackle again. Co-op with the right people almost always enhances an experience, but in the wrong company, it can just be an utter mess.

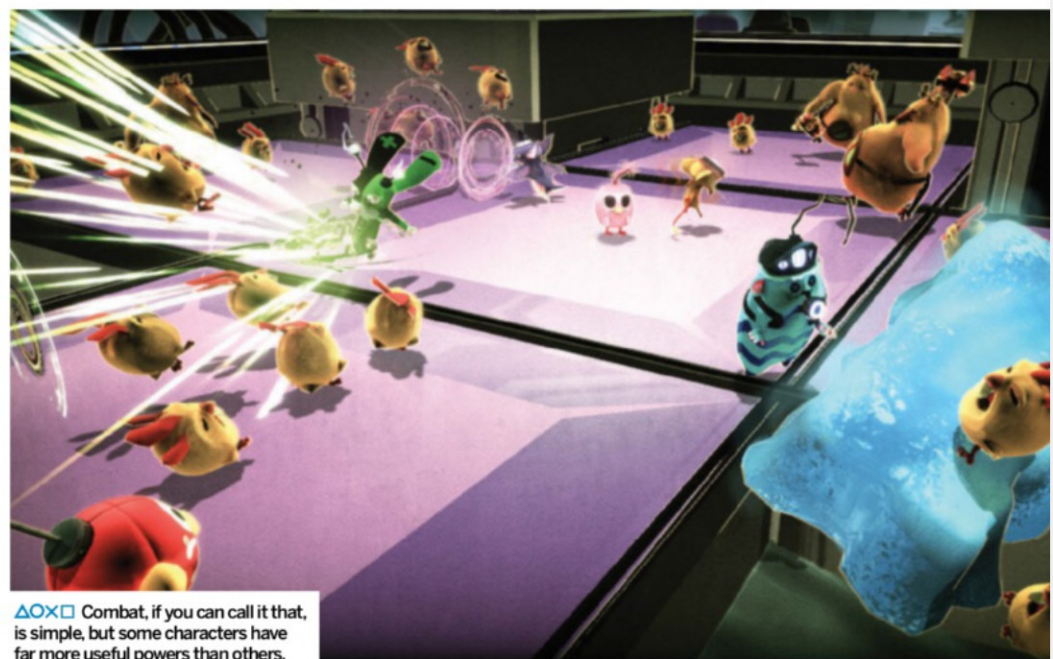
Interestingly, *Tiny Brains* seems to be a game born out of this chaos, one that actively revels in making players shout, scream, bicker and panic and one that is all the more entertaining for it. The concept is oh-so simple, with the cast of four lab experiments each offering one unique ability and a series of increasingly puzzling challenges laid before them as they make their daring escape. One can shove objects with mind powers, another has the ability to do the opposite and draw all nearby things towards him, one

can swap places with a targeted object via teleportation and the last can create matter, which sounds impressive until you realise that this just means he can make a box appear and get rid of it at will.

Taken in isolation, these abilities will get you pretty much nowhere – to survive, you'll need to use them in tandem. In single-player, this translates to using the shoulder buttons to switch between critters and use their abilities in sequence and given the fairly straightforward nature of the ability set, it means that nothing is ever that taxing. If anything, it's just a bit boring – you'll find yourself using the same loops of powers

to clear most of the challenges, and it's just a bit fiddly until you learn the order of the foursome and can swap to the right one instantly. A touch pad solution akin to *Killzone Shadow Fall*'s OWL mode selection would perhaps have been the better option for solo players, especially with the touch pad only used for a marker placement system that only has a purpose in multiplayer.

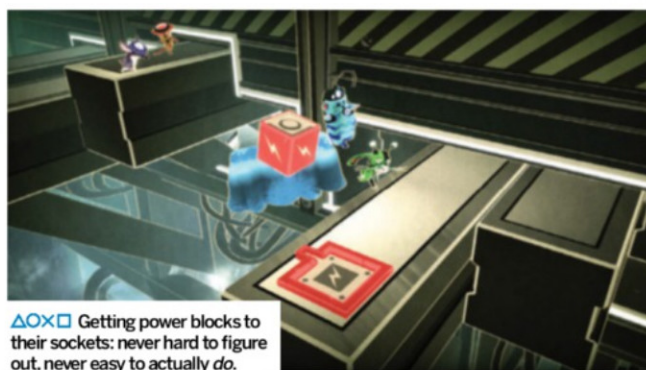
And, to be honest, you probably shouldn't be playing *Tiny Brains* on your own anyway. It's a game designed to be enjoyed with friends and one that suffers massively in solo mode, to the point where playing alone could be enough to



△○×□ Combat, if you can call it that, is simple, but some characters have far more useful powers than others.



△○×□ Moving a ball around a maze is surprisingly tricky, largely because of some very strange physics...



△○×□ Getting power blocks to their sockets: never hard to figure out, never easy to actually do.



“PLAYING ALONE COULD BE ENOUGH TO PUT PEOPLE OFF THE GAME ALTOGETHER”



PLAY VIDEO

Watch the review on our YouTube channel or your free disc, with team commentary.

YouTube www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

put people off the game altogether. This is a shame, since co-op is a riot. Puzzles are altered slightly to make cooperation and planning essential and, while you might find yourself arguing over who gets to take control of the more useful critters, that's almost part of the fun – using the matter-creating hamster thing, for instance, is a more important role for the team than teleportation and

△○×□ The game comes alive in co-op, where combining powers is crucial to success.

there's more pressure and responsibility to successfully block off areas, create makeshift ammo and propel your buddies to new heights via detonation. Expect your mates to bitch if (read: when) you get it wrong although again, that's part of the fun really.

Throwaway mini-games do little to make up for the fact that there's only a few hours of game here, with co-op confusion relied upon a little too much to add longevity. But with puzzles changing based on the number of players present, you can kind of create your own longevity by replaying challenges with two, three and four players to see how they differ. There are some novel little tricks here that highlight just how co-op focussed the game is, too – the aforementioned marker placement using the DualShock 4's touch pad is one (although it seems to cause confusion rather than allay it, presumably for comic effect and

additional co-op chaos – *Tiny Brains'* main selling point) and in local co-op, the light bar on your controller will glow the colour of your character, making it easy for other players to identify who the idiot is that keeps falling down holes and mock accordingly.

Online matchmaking makes finding co-op partners to run with that much easier for those who can't or won't play local multiplayer, or at least it would if there was anyone online. While the co-op side of the game comes heartily recommended, it's probably worth hanging on for a sale or the almost inevitable PlayStation Plus showing to get a spike in active players, since playing alone while you wait for non-existent extra players to join is just a grind – even this early on in the PS4's life, there are far better ways to be using your time with it than playing a hobbled version of a decent game. A waste of time for solo players, then, but great fun in co-op, and not simply because everything is better with friends – because sometimes, chaos and ineptitude can be good things.

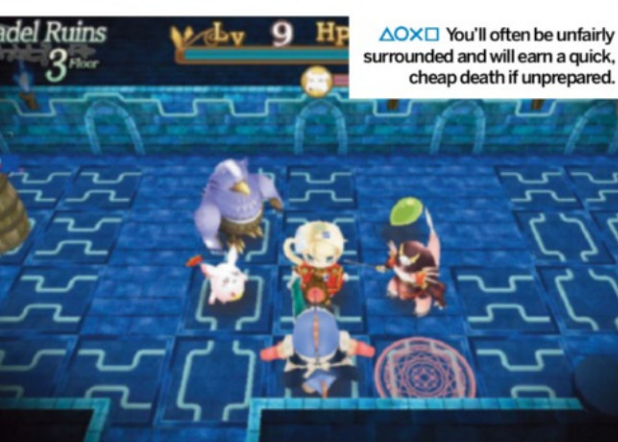
Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Tiny Brains is a game that isn't so much improved by co-op as made for it – playing alone is pretty much pointless but the chaos and laughs presented by multiplayer give it a reason to exist.

68%





Sorcery Saga: Curse Of The Great Curry God

Curry, dungeon delving and instant death



VITA

IT'S A BRAVE developer that releases a roguelike at retail, and it's an even braver one that releases such a niche genre on one of gaming's most misunderstood consoles.

That's exactly what Compile has done though, rummaging through its back catalogue to deliver a super shiny update of *Madou Monogatari*, an old roguelike series first released in 1989.

And yet it's also something of a canny move. After all, the brilliant *Demon's Souls* and *Dark Souls* have proven that gamers are prepared to die over and over again if the pay-off is worth it, while roguelikes are relatively sparse on Sony's handheld, meaning that Compile effectively has the market largely to itself.

Of course it's worth noting that *Sorcery Saga*, as a roguelike, sees death coming quick and often. You're introduced to Pupuru, a trainee wizard with a love of curry who finds herself embroiled in a quest to retrieve the ingredients of the

'Legendary Magic Curry' that will hopefully bring customers back to her friend Nicholai's curry shop, after he lost all his patrons to a fancier restaurant. Pupuru soon allies herself with an impossibly cute furball called Kuu and a mysterious fortune teller, while fending off the advances of the evil lord Gigadas, thwarting the wizard Zeo who may or not be a pervert and escaping the bumbling capture attempts of the three adventurers hired by Nicholai's rival.

If you think that sounds nuttier than a fruitcake then you'd be right. *Sorcery Saga*'s plot is a world away from the po-faced approach of most JRPGs thanks to some funny one-liners, a healthy dose of innuendo, entertaining characters and some interesting developments. Granted, it's not very original, but it's a hell of a lot of fun, with a bright localisation that will make you see it through to its silly end.

Mechanically, *Sorcery Saga* is everything you'd expect from a roguelike. Pupuru explores a large number of randomly designed dungeons with

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Aksys Games

DEVELOPER
Compile Heart/
Zerodiv

PSN PRICE
\$39.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
Teen

TWITTER
@aksysgames

Trophies 34





ΔOX□ Sorcery Saga's story is crazy, but that's pretty much par for the course. It's funny, though.

ΔOX□ As you'd expect the boss fights are suitably tricky, so ensure you're well equipped.



ΔOX□ Don't steal this guy's stuff. He'll kill you quicker than a boss and make you regret that five-fingered discount.



ΔOX□ There are all sorts of weird and wonderful enemies to encounter, many of which are surprisingly tough.

multiple floors, killing enemies and gaining useful items. Play is turn-based with actions ranging from movement to spell casting and attacking. Luckily, Kuu is highly useful as Pupuru can feed the little scamp anything that doesn't prove helpful. As Kuu grows in power, he gains new skills that range from spitting out laser beams to auto-appraising items and fusing together items to upgrade them. This last ability is useful as, once mastered, it takes the edge off Pupuru's encounters, making for a surprisingly easy adventure. Pupuru can also slowly unlock the ability to make curries and use special healing circles, further helping her survive the dangerous dungeons. You'll still die of course, losing everything apart from your equipped weapon and shield, but not as often as in other roguelikes.

Luck also plays a big part in *Sorcery Saga*, as you're entirely at the mercy of its in-game drops. There's a certain scroll for example that buffs any weapon or shield you pick up; after losing a +18 Tuna Sword

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

Twitter If it's tikka masala SORCE I'll have some of that @rbs_york

Twitter OK, Sorcery Saga has some of the most adorable music I've heard in a long time. Holy crap, what a bizarre game. @He110Ne0

Twitter Catchy vocals in the boss music. Should've expected as much from Aksys. @_Deseren

Twitter Playing Sorcery Saga: Curse Of The Great Curry God on Vita. I can't help but get hungry every time I play this game. @passthemstickss

Twitter A turn-based dungeon crawler RPG focused around making curry. Ummm I'll probably play that. @pkollar

"SORCERY SAGA IS A WORLD AWAY FROM THE APPROACH OF MOST JAPANESE RPGS"

(which, yes, is actually a tuna) we started over, only to see said scroll appear *once* in the first five hours of starting a new game. Get crummy drops like this and *Sorcery Saga* becomes a grind, but get something that boosts your base hit points and things become a lot easier. The difficulty does feel a little off at times, but the sheer amount of magic you can find (providing you find the relevant books to learn them from) does balance things somewhat.

Sorcery Saga is also a collector's dream with a huge amount of different weapons, items, shields and spells to uncover. A quest shop also opens up midway through the adventure that rewards completing dungeons multiple times with new outfits for Pupuru, while returning to Pupuru's home lets her enhance any items she has,

store money or unused items and even try on new clothes.

It's a relatively short adventure for those who are able to easily power through it, but the strong localisation, decent mechanics and entertaining characters easily justify the asking price. The UK release can't come soon enough.

Darran Jones

VERDICT

Sorcery Saga is a surprisingly accessible roguelike that ensures newer gamers will get to enjoy this niche genre. It's short for an RPG, but does offer plenty of replay value.

70%

REVIEW ROUND-UP

WE MISS THE *Tony Hawk* games. While *Skate* kickflipped in to fill the gap left by the franchise being run into the ground with increasingly awful annual updates, it just wasn't the same – *Skate*'s pseudo-realism didn't offer the same potential for insane lines and hour-long combos that the Birdman did in his day. It's probably for this reason that we've fallen in love with Vita indie title **OLLIOLLI [1]**, a 2D skating game that puts emphasis on timing, variety and sheer greed. Each area offers crazy combo potential for the brave, with five challenges per stage (akin to *Hawk*'s level goals back in the day) based around everything from high scores and combos to collectibles and using specific tricks. Finish these and a more challenging Pro version of the stage is unlocked, with five even tougher challenges of its own.

The trick system is effectively a simplified version of *Skate*'s stick-based mechanic – hold the left stick in any direction to ready an ollie, make the motion for the desired trick (a *Street Fighter*-style quarter circle fireball motion,

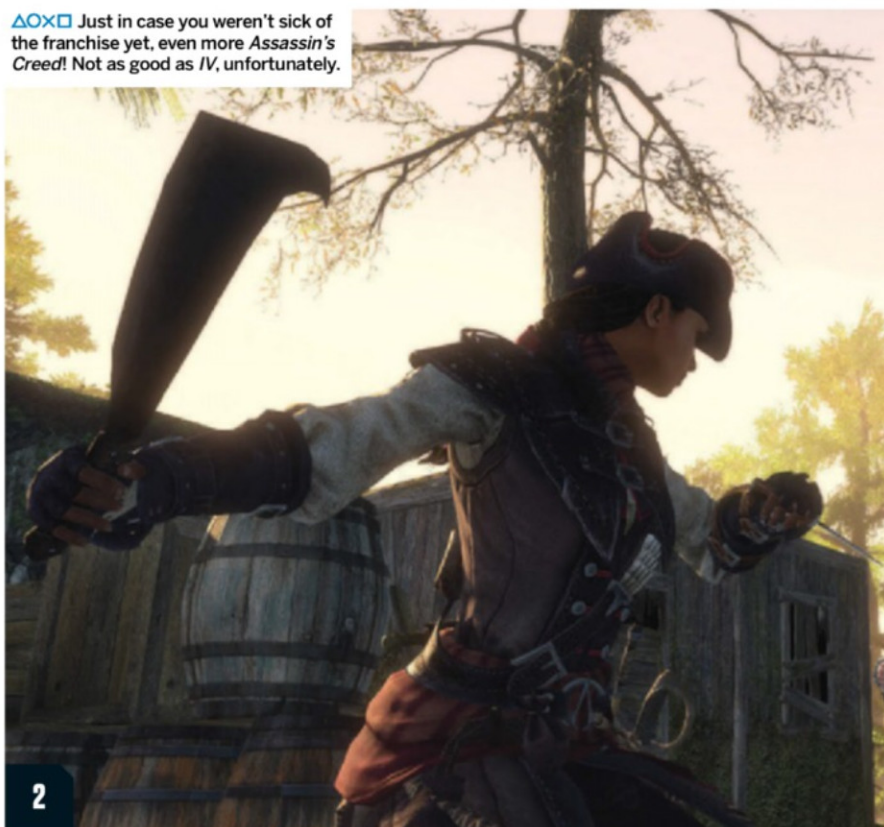
say, or one more complex for higher-scoring stunts) and release, with a timely tap of X required to land it and the score based on how accurately you nail the landing. Grinding follows much the same rules, again with timing key to keeping speed and score high. While simple, the quick restarts and endless replayability of the unlocked Spots (leaderboard-driven single-combo high score challenges, including a daily one that you get just one attempt to dominate per day) make this a

"IT'S NOT PARTICULARLY EXCITING, EVEN BY ASSASSIN'S CREED'S STANDARDS"

great little-and-often game, making it the perfect game to have sat on the Vita for when you get a few minutes of downtime.

You'll need slightly more than a few minutes to make a dent in **ASSASSIN'S CREED LIBERATION: HD [2]** though, but you won't need a Vita any more – Ubisoft has upscaled the ambitious handheld outing and brought it to

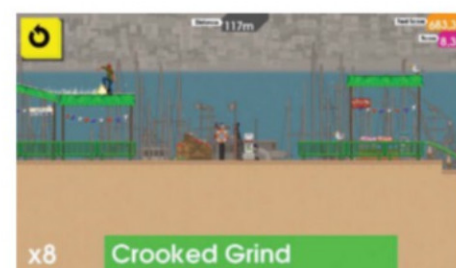
△○×□ Just in case you weren't sick of the franchise yet, even more *Assassin's Creed*! Not as good as *IV*, unfortunately.



△○×□ If you long for another *Skate* game, give *OlliOlli* a try. It's surprisingly similar and really hard to put down. There's always time for just one more go...

PS3. It's a good transfer to be fair, with everything looking far nicer than it did on Vita and most of the technical shortcomings resolved. But sadly, it's still not a particularly exciting game even by *Assassin's Creed*'s standards, and that's only exacerbated by the fact that *Black Flag* has come along since and brought so much new content and gameplay to the franchise – *Liberation* just feels like a step back, if a very shiny and sometimes interesting one. It doesn't help that one of its mechanics (the ability to switch between personas) simply isn't well thought-out, with only the Assassin mode being in any way fun but the Lady and Slave guises being enforced by story missions all the same.

Still, Vita-less *Assassin's Creed* fans will appreciate the ability to fill this gap in their knowledge and at a reasonable price





too, plus it's good to know that Ubisoft is adept at bring Vita games to console – it'll probably do pretty well and that gives us hope that other devs will take similar steps and we'll end up with home console versions of great games like *Soul Sacrifice* or even PSP exclusives like awesome *Final Fantasy* brawler *Dissidia* to PS3. That'd be awesome.

As awesome as a gun that turns enemies into snowmen, though? Or one that fires black holes? Perhaps not. These are just the latest tools of destruction offered by **RATCHET & CLANK: INTO THE NEXUS** [3], the mid-price swansong of the *Future* saga and likely the Lombax's last outing on PS3. While a little on the formulaic side, the good



news is that *Into The Nexus* takes its cues from *A Crack In Time*, the franchise's high point and still one of our favourite PS3 exclusives – there's a good blend of over-the-top gunplay, platforming and puzzles and it's all wrapped up in the usual oh-so fluffy blanket of daft comedy and colourful explosions. *Nexus* is a little darker in tone than its forerunners, but only to a point. You can only be so dark when you have a gun that fires clowns, after all. A suitably explosive and ridiculous finale to Ratchet's platforming adventures on PS3, then, and while it might not be quite so meaty as *A Crack In Time* in terms of content, it's hard to complain too much when the price point reflects this as fairly as can be expected.

And if you like to watch colourful things go boom, you'll find plenty to like about **NARUTO SHIPPUDEN ULTIMATE**



△○×□ If you're up to date on *Naruto*, this'll make sense. If not, turn away, stranger... there is little for you here.

NINJA STORM 3 FULL BURST [4]

the latest ludicrously-titled anime brawler from masters of the insane, CyberConnect2. As ever, the game holds up whether you're au fait with the show and/or manga or not – it's a rock-solid fighting game either way, with this enhanced version of *UNS3* being probably the best version yet thanks to its crazy tag-team battles, vast rebalanced roster of ninjas and show-stopping Jutsus that look just like they do in the anime. Sure, it's just last year's game bundled with a bunch of DLC and, as such, it's not really worth upgrading from vanilla *UNS3* to this. But if you're in the market for a fighter to fill the gap while we wait for *BlazBlue Chronophantasma* and *Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*, you'll find a thoroughly entertaining, pretty and complex brawler in this. You'll have to wait until the next one to play as Mecha-Naruto, though. Yeah... that's a real thing now.

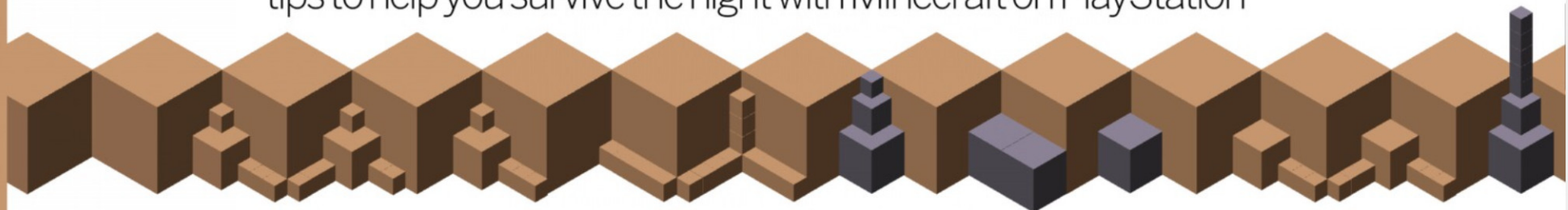
△○×□ No wonder he looks mad – his face is on fire.





MINECRAFT GUIDE

Finally the world's biggest indie game has made the intrepid step onto PlayStation, but where do you start with such an overwhelming world to explore? Here are some key tips to help you survive the night with Minecraft on PlayStation



GET WOOD

The first key rule to any initial *Minecraft* session – even for the experienced – is to kill a tree. The majority of time you'll spawn within a few metres of a tree – these resources are not rare and even in the sparsest of environments you'll find a handful to cut down. Simply go up to the tree and punch its wood, vacuuming up those precious pieces of poplar.

You'll use wood to turn into wood planks and, then, into structures for protection as well as objects and other materials – such as the important Crafting Table. With the Crafting Table in place you can then craft increasingly complex items once you've sourced the necessary goods.

It's worth noting that the various types of wood you collect have no major difference, only the tint of brown the wood appears with when placed as planks into the world.

THE HOUSE THAT BLOCKS BUILT

Next up you'll need secure housing. This can be as big and elaborate as you fancy, but ultimately its only purpose is to keep you safe from the nasties that spawn in the darkness.

Wood is an obvious choice for your first structure, but you can just as easily carve out a home from the side of a rocky mountain or even burrow deep into a hill like a hobbit.

Whatever you choose all you'll need is a door, which you can build from wood planks at a Crafting Table. Placing this requires space for two blocks in height (enough for your character to walk through), and from there you're got a solid – and easily accessible – home to return to.

Extra additions to your home would include windows (made from smelting sand and using the resulting glass), torches for lighting (crafted from wooden sticks and coal) and a bed to quickly skip waiting for sunrise (built with wool and wooden planks). From there, that's everything you need.



GET STUFFED

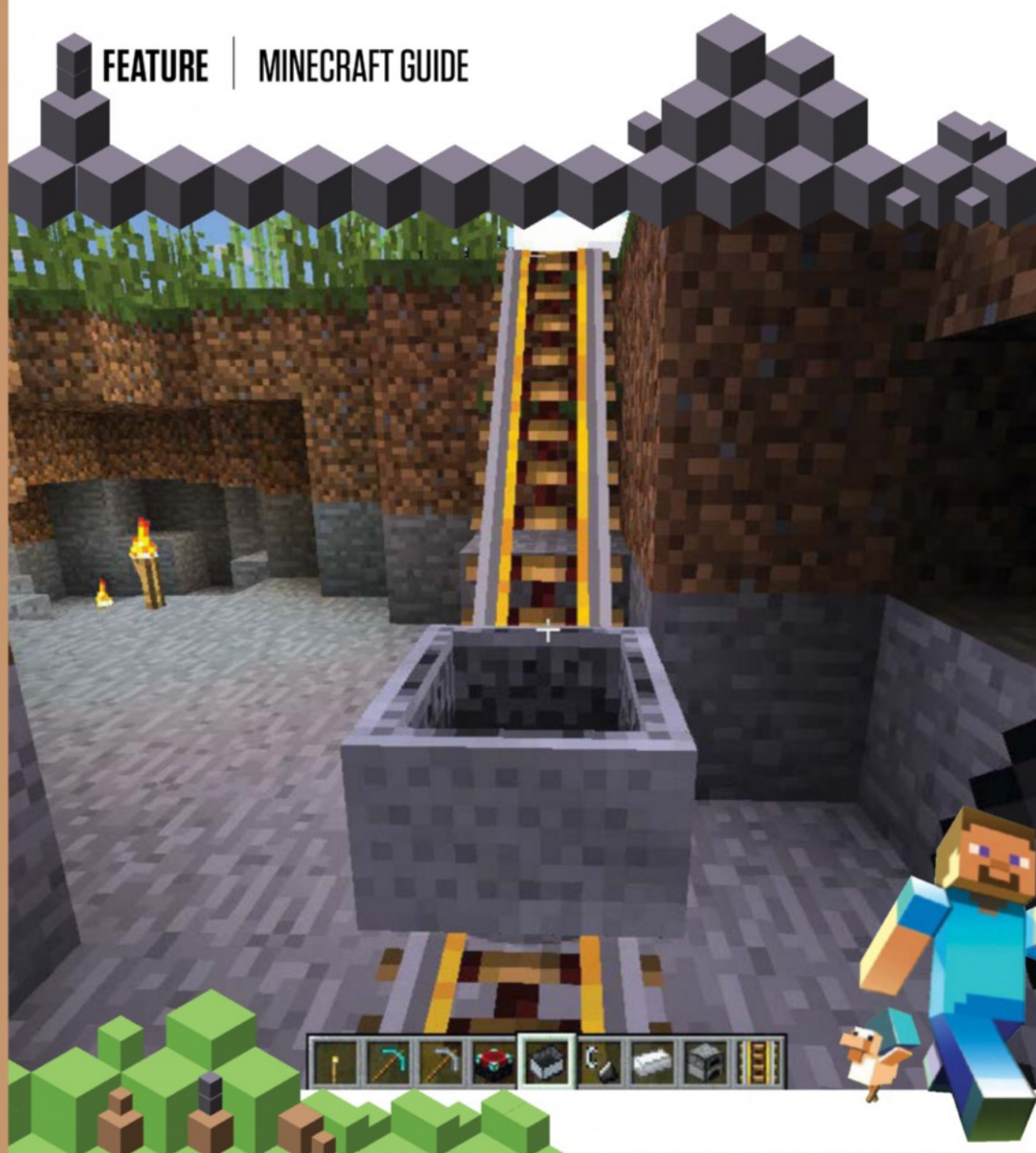
You'll notice two bars on the screen – one of hearts and the other of food. The former is fairly obvious, as no doubt you've played enough games to know that's your health. The food on the other hand represents your stamina, an ever decreasing stat that – if left unchecked – could lead to your dying of starvation. There's a variety of food you can eat in *Minecraft*, the easiest to acquire early on being pork chops from a slain pig. It's always best to keep your stamina bar completely full, however, since that'll regenerate your health over time as an added bonus.



HOMeward BOUND

A useful strategy to keep in mind when playing *Minecraft* is the concept of homemade 'beacons'. Using whatever material you have in abundance you can build a tall tower – it doesn't need to be well-designed, so a huge stack of mud will be enough. The purpose of this is to create a visual identifier for something important (such as your newly-built home) so you can always find your way back. Simply build a central pillar one block wide, then add a single block on the side of the pillar spiralling around to create steps. If you have torches, you can place one on the very top of the pillar so you can see it in the dark too.

“YOU CAN EASILY CARVE OUT A HOME FROM THE SIDE OF A ROCKY MOUNTAIN”



GO CART

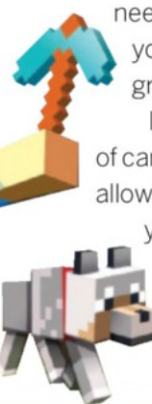
Minecarts and rails are the fastest way to travel in *Minecraft*, though admittedly it does require quite a bit of planning and foresight to make it work. Say your home is a considerable distance from that resource-rich cavern you've been exploring and can't be bothered with the trek each time? That's where minecarts come in.

To craft a rail you'll need iron ingots and wood sticks, and a lot of them. Each rail piece needs to be placed on top of a block in a row leading towards wherever it is you want your route to take you.

You'll also need to craft powered rails, special rail pieces that – when activated with a redstone torch next to it – will boost the speed of any minecart passing through it. Without an adjacent redstone torch the powered rail will act as a brake, halting the movement of any minecart; this is useful when making an automated redstone minecart circuit. To craft a powered rail you'll need a good number of gold ingots, and though you don't

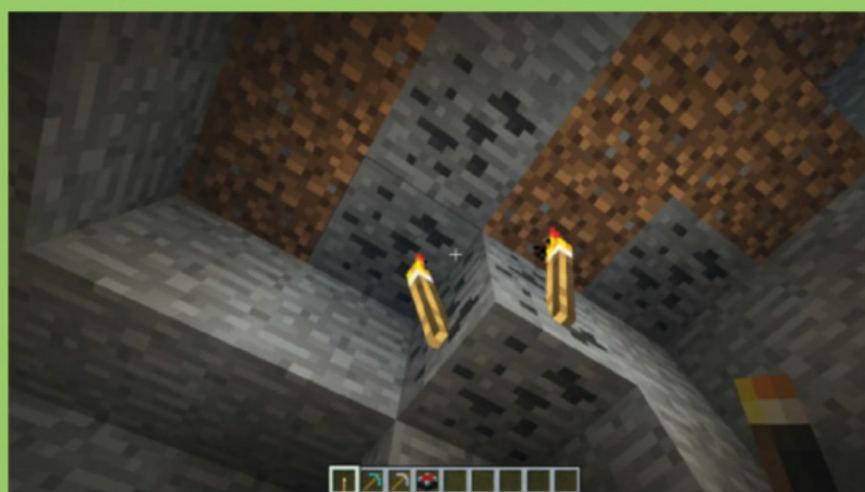
need as many rails to build a successful minecart route you'll need a good chunk of the resource to cover a great amount of distance.

It's worth noting that you can get a variety of types of carts. Your basic minecart will be useable by yourself, allowing you to hop in and enjoy the ride. Additionally you can craft storage carts (by combining a wooden chest) to store your goodies, and a furnace minecart – which acts as a kind of engine to push additional carts along the circuit.



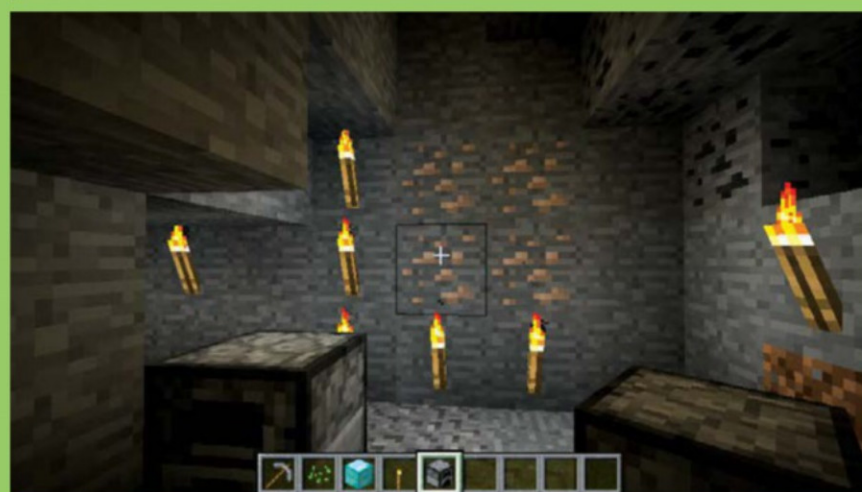
ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Once you've built a home, it's time to get to work on collecting resources. Grab yourself a pickaxe and go mining for these precious minerals...



COAL

This is the most important resource you can find early on and will come from stone with black speckles on it. Smash this up and collect the coal pieces that drop to make torches and fuel for your furnace. If supplies of coal are hard to come by initially, then remember you can use a single piece to burn wood in a furnace to make charcoal.



IRON

The second most important resource after coal is iron, which comes from stones with pale brown specks on them. Mining iron ore requires a stone pickaxe or better, and can be used to smelt iron ingots. With these ingots you can craft better gear, armour and useful items. It will continue to be useful throughout your time in *Minecraft*.



PILLAR JUMPING

Here's a quick tip to help you out of a sticky situation or two: it's possible to place blocks beneath you immediately after jumping in a technique known as 'pillar jumping'. Here you'll place a block directly beneath you after leaping into the air, and doing so repeatedly will build a pillar to help you reach otherwise hard-to-reach places. Of course the pillar is a one-way route upwards, so if there's nowhere else to go you'll need to mine through the pillar again to safely reach the ground.

"ONLY A DIAMOND PICKAXE CAN MINE OBSIDIAN"



NETHER REGIONS

Once you've spent a chunk of time exploring, improving your home and fighting beasts you're probably keen to see a little more of the world, so why not search The Nether? This hellish realm can only be accessed through a Nether Portal that can only be built with obsidian rock.

Obsidian doesn't occur naturally very often, but can be made yourself by pouring water (with a bucket) over lava, cooling the otherwise dangerous liquid and permanently turning it into obsidian. Only a diamond pickaxe can mine obsidian, so it won't be early on that you can access the Nether.

Once you've collected 14 pieces of obsidian you can build your portal. Make a 4x5 rectangular frame

with the obsidian then, using a flint and steel, ignite the obsidian rock. If done correctly, the portal will appear almost instantly, creating a purple 'door' that you can enter by walking into the portal. Give it a few seconds and you'll appear in the Nether, an atmospheric and dangerous environment home to some unique monsters and resources.

It's worth noting that travelling through the Nether actually counts as eight steps on the normal Overworld. This means you can actually use the Nether as a means to quickly navigate the Overworld by building additional portals once inside the Nether; one block equals eight blocks on the Overworld, so you can travel vast distances with only a short walk through the Nether.



DIAMOND

This precious ore can be mined from stone blocks with light blue dashed through the rock, but can't be mined unless you have an iron pickaxe or better. This is a luxury resource that only appears in the depths of the world, and can be used to craft the best quality equipment, weapons and armour.



REDSTONE

This red rock can be found commonly in the world and can be successfully garnered with an iron pickaxe or greater. This material is used for redstone wiring, redstone torches and a multitude of related blocks, each of which is used in conjunction with a redstone circuit. With this mineral you'll be able to build elaborate mechanical systems.




INTERVIEW



TWO YEARS OF VITA: TALKING STRATEGY & FUTURE

PlayStation's UK managing director Fergal Gara talks handheld performance, connectivity and marketing



Being open and honest, I think we should have hoped for higher sales. I guess it entered a market which was much more complicated than it was when [PS Vita] was first conceived and designed. The positive, though, is that it most certainly does the job it was intended to do very well and the feedback from gamers is exactly that – it's a powerful device that satisfies them. While not growing dramatically, it's not falling away or dying and that's great to see.

Of course, more recently, it has a new role as part of the PlayStation 4 ecosystem. We've only had our hands on the PS4 for a few weeks, but we see that as having a significant role to play for the PS Vita going into the future.

Remote Play connectivity with PS4 has been a big part of the Vita's marketing recently – is

there a risk that consumers will fail to see why they should own a Vita without a PS4?

I think you're right to point that out, and it's down to us to make sure the messaging is clear enough to get across that the PS Vita is both – it's a standalone console on which you can play games, but it's also a fantastic companion to the PS4. The TV campaign we have running right now shows exactly that; that there are many roles PS Vita can fill and it does them all well.

How have sales compared across the two years Vita has been available?

To be honest, the two years' sales are quite equivalent. Once you come down from the initial launch surge in sales, this year has been rather like last year. The positive in that is that it had a very strong finish to 2012 and it has shown to be much more seasonal than PS3, for example. It looks as though the same thing happened in 2013, a big sales boost at the end of the year.

What we're currently researching is to what extent Remote Play had in driving 2013's peak, as opposed to the release of a not-great *Call Of Duty* title and a somewhat stronger *Assassin's Creed* title which drove 2012's sales. Last year [on Vita] you've had things like *Tearaway* – which is not as big of an IP, but is probably more innovative of an IP – being released and it's going to take us a while to understand which element has contributed to the recent success of sales



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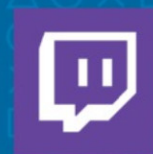
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numbers. The good news is that we are seeing success, and in some ways Vita has outdone the PS3.

Do developers think much about having to include Vita/PS4 Remote Play, or do you do that work for them?

A lot of the work for Remote Play is achieved at the system level, meaning that it's not a big overhead concern for any studio – whether that's an external studio, or one of our own. I've never heard of any arm-twisting to deliver that feature and there's no reason to believe it exists.

The only time [Remote Play] may not work is if a game includes extensive use of PS4 Camera

functions. The nearest example I can think that probably wouldn't work is *Just Dance*. Not that I've tried it... [laughs]. Clearly, that kind of game isn't suited to Remote Play and there would be no objection from us about that. There is a front camera on the PS Vita, so I'm sure there will be certain PS4 Camera functions that can be mapped to the Vita for some games.

With PS4, PS3 and PS Vita all currently doing the rounds, is it difficult to concentrate sufficient resources to each?

Yeah, that's really our job, from a communications point of view, to highlight the advantages of each platform and highlight the

points of difference within the [PlayStation] ecosystem. The glue that joins them all together is PlayStation Plus, and I think the Instant Game Collection provides enormous benefits and the more systems you own the better, in that regard.

The PS3 is a little more of an island than the other two as it's less easy to connect PS3 to the others, but it is a solid piece of hardware. Then, the PS4, at a relatively great value price point, gives you that additional future-proof experience and a much more connected experience – through the PlayStation App on various mobile devices, as well as Remote Play on PS Vita.

How important is PS Plus and other digital content to Vita?

Since day one PS Vita has had a higher proportion of games consumed digitally than the PS3, which is quite intriguing and shows that many gamers see it as the iPod of gaming. Physical game sales remain the majority with PS Vita, but there is a trend towards digital consumption. If we could do without one or the other, it might over time be that game cards is the one we could do without.

How have retailers reacted to being removed from the loop by the success of digital?

We're not taking them out of the loop, it's the consumers that are shifting their behaviour. However, the opportunity for retailers to join our digital program is there and has been embraced by some of them. Certainly, there is more interesting stuff we want to do with PS Vita so that the profile remains there at retail – whether that's in the form of a physical game card or a downloadable product code. It's very important that we retain a games presence at retail.

Do you judge the success of Vita against that of the PSP?

The PSP and Vita landed into considerably different worlds. As far as the Vita is concerned, the advent of handheld gaming on phone and tablets complicated the marketplace. Having said that, of course the PSP is a reference point. The Vita doesn't look likely to achieve the same sales levels as the PSP, but the encouraging thing is that Vita sales are not declining and its new role with the PS4 has only just begun.



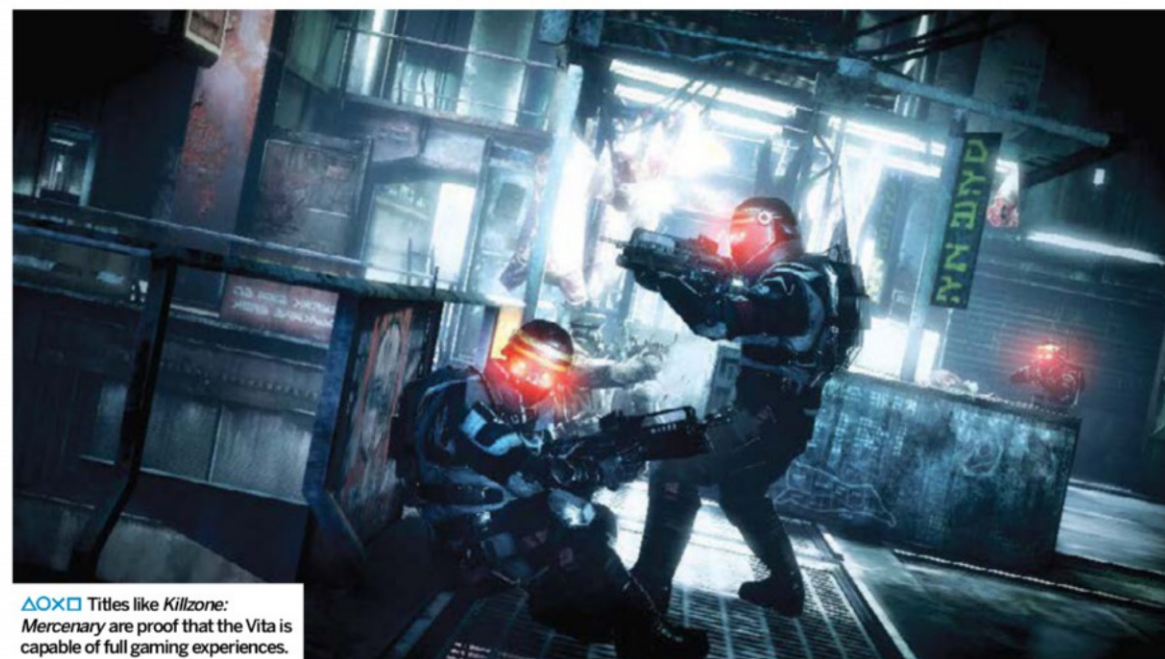
△OX□ Vita TV is looking like a no-go in the UK, for now at least.

ARE WE GETTING VITA TV?

Probably not, it seems

■ Already available in Japan, Vita TV is a small box that allows you to play both physical and digital PS Vita games through your TV using a DualShock 3 controller.

At present, there are no plans to release the micro-console outside of Japan, but that didn't stop us quizzing Gara on the likelihood of such an event. "We are watching with interest what's happening with it in Japan and what we can learn from its launch there," Gara tells us. "Are we interested in it over here, as a UK business? Of course we are, but we want to learn more about its strengths and how people react to it. Even now we don't know the full story with Vita TV in Japan as the PS4 hasn't launched there yet, and when it does you'll be able to use your DualShock 4 with Vita TV."



△OX□ Titles like *Killzone: Mercenary* are proof that the Vita is capable of full gaming experiences.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

The digital future is here and Sony has great plans for its new PlayStation Now streaming service. Confused?
Don't worry – we've got you covered...

A GOLDEN STREAM

At CES last month, Andrew House dropped a megaton announcement – PlayStation Now is the new form of Gaikai, the streaming tech Sony purchased last year for a small fortune.

The Gaikai logo, featuring a stylized blue square icon to the left of the word "GAIKAI" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

ALL THE CLASSICS

It's a new service that will allow users to stream games directly to their PS4, PS3 and Vita. To begin with only PlayStation 3 titles will be available, and Sony is remaining tight-lipped on whether PS2 and PSone games will make an appearance. If we had to bet on it, we'd say they will show up on there eventually. We're dying to kick back with a spot of *PaRappa* at some point so here's hoping.



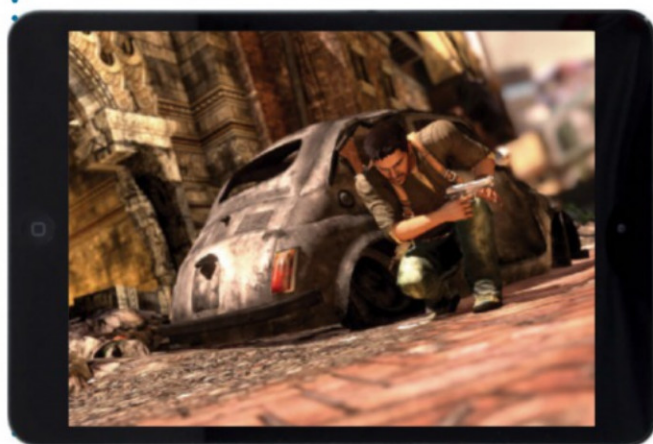
PLAYSTATION NOT REQUIRED

In addition to PlayStation platforms, most new Bravia TVs will have the tech built-in, and Sony is promising the service will eventually expand across a multitude of net-enabled devices like tablets and smartphones.



BUT YOU WILL NEED A PAD

That means you'll be able to play games like *The Last Of Us* and *Skyrim* on your PS3, Vita, directly through the television or even on your phone! The service is only compatible with DualShock 3 initially, but DS4 support is undoubtedly coming.



THE INFINITE POWER OF THE CLOUD

Your games and saved progress will be stored in the cloud, so you can begin playing a game on a PS4, then continue your progress later on a Vita.



TIME TO UPGRADE

Sony has said the service will require a 5Mb/s internet connection (or ideally better) to really get the full experience out of PlayStation Now. Might be time to get on the horn with your provider, eh?



NO ONE'S PERFECT

At this early stage, there are still a few minor flaws: small concessions in the visual department, such as compression artefacts and lower resolutions. Input lag could also be an issue if you don't have the internet speeds necessary. As with all things, these issues are likely to get smoothed out over with time.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Sony hasn't offered any specifics on pricing yet, but has said that there will be both individual renting of titles and a full, subscription-based service similar to Netflix available, offering access to the complete catalogue of games.

COMING SOON... ISH

PlayStation Now went into beta testing at the end of January, with a full US roll-out expected in the summer. We still don't know for sure when the service will be available in Europe, but a leaked document suggests early 2015.





EXTENDED PLAY

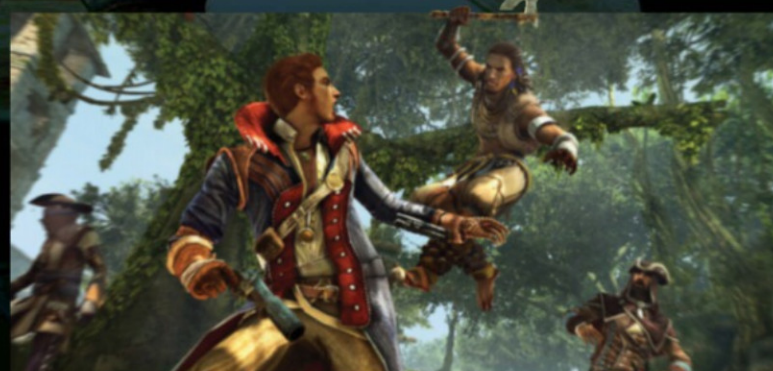
ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Ubisoft's return to form is already the biggest game on PS4 in terms of scale, but there are a number of ways to make Kenway's adventure even longer. If you thought you were done with life on the high seas, think again

MULTIPLAYER (ONLINE)

■ **MANY WRITE OFF** *Assassin's Creed's* multiplayer component as a throwaway, me-too addition – at one point it may have been but, in the iterations since its introduction, it has actually grown into a surprisingly engrossing and inventive competitive suite in its own right. A bunch of modes (and the ability to customise and create your own variants) are on offer from the start, with

each presenting a novel twist on the same concept – find your target, stalk them and then kill them without blowing your cover. It's all incredibly tense, and even though a few of the later unlocks screw the balance a little and make life hard for newcomers, once you find your footing there are hundreds of hours of competitive stabbing in store for you should you want them.



KENWAY'S FLEET (MINI-GAME)

■ **ONCE YOU SIGN** into a uPlay account, you'll be able to retire to the captain's cabin of the Jackdaw any time you're not on a mission and take control of Kenway's ever-growing fleet of ships via a time management mini-game. Having to endure lengthy strings of ship battles (which play out like a simple turn-based RPG) on the big screen can take some time and get in the way of your proper pirate adventuring, but the good news is that you can use the *AC/IV* companion app from your tablet or phone to control and manage your fleet even while you're busy doing other things in the main game. It's oddly compelling as a side-quest too (not least because there's an Elite plan hidden away in there somewhere) and the ability to take it with you wherever you go is welcome indeed.



NO HUD (OPTIONS)

■ **THE PRIMARY COMPLAINT** about *Assassin's Creed* as a series is that it's way too easy – combat and platforming are simplified to the point where a single button is often all you need, although you can redress this somewhat by switching off all

HUD elements and notifications for a more cinematic and, crucially, skill-based experience. You'll need to learn to read enemy attacks properly and can no longer rely on the button prompts in the top right to tell you what to do – even exploration is

more interesting when you aren't just following beacons from point to point. It's no replacement for genuinely taxing gameplay (we still hope to see Ubisoft add difficulty levels in future games) but it's certainly a step in the right direction.

FREEDOM CRY (DLC)

■ **WHILE THE STORE** may be littered with bits and bobs to make your pirating life easier, *Freedom Cry* is the first and only significant single-player add-on so far. Set after the finale of the main game, this new story sees Kenway step back from the wheel so that his quartermaster, Adewale, might enjoy a little time in the spotlight – having joined up with the Assassins for himself and rocking the familiar hood/blades combo, it all feels familiar and, outside of cut-scenes, Kenway and Adewale are pretty interchangeable. The only notable difference between the two comes from their gear. Kenway's cutlasses and pistols had speed going for them but Adewale seems to favour raw power – his main weapon is a dirty great machete, while his ranged option is a blunderbuss capable of felling multiple enemies in a single shot. Subtlety clearly isn't his strong point.

Freedom Cry offers its own mini-sandbox, with one new town to explore, a decent-sized sea area and plenty of smaller locations to discover as well. The major difference is the need to free slaves in order to improve much of your gear, with numerous ways to do so in each area, from rescuing injured stragglers or pursued escapees to raiding plantations and boarding slave ships. It's a delicate subject matter but it's handled excellently by Ubisoft, offering a chunk of familiar gameplay framed by a narrative angle that few have tackled in gaming. A great piece of DLC, then, and it's free with the Season Pass too. Splendid.



TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

With this month's bounty of PS Plus games you'll grab a ton of superb titles, with the brilliant DMC Devil May Cry and Borderlands 2 available for PS3 owners and Soul Sacrifice and BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend for PS Vita gamers. We've detailed how to mop up those Trophies on all these games, but don't forget PS4 gamers will also get the quirky survival game Don't Starve...



DMC DEVIL MAY CRY

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

■ **AS GREAT AS** *DMC Devil May Cry* is, you'll need to *really* like it to want to get the Platinum Trophy. Here you'll need six playthroughs in total: the initial one where you unlock everything and then the later difficulties, which includes one-hit death for Dante. Finish the game, finish it again on Son of Sparda mode and then finish it on Dante Must Die difficulty – this will be tougher, so you'll need to use those items you've stocked up on. After completing this mode, however, you'll also unlock 'Super Dante'. With this skin you can complete the game on Heaven and Hell and Hell and Hell difficulties without much problem, since equipping it will give you infinite Devil Trigger.

There's a large number of Trophies devoted to completing or surviving a level in a particular fashion, but many of these are fairly easy providing you know what you're aiming for – you'll be able to get them on any of your multiple playthroughs. There are also a fair few Trophies earned for cumulative demon kills, Red Orbs spent, collectibles found, weapons used and the like. Again, these will likely unlock as you progress through the game naturally.

The last Trophy you'll aim for is 'Jackpot!', where you'll need to get SSS Rank on every mission on Nephilim difficulty. You can't use Super Dante here, but since you've already played through the game enough times it should be simple enough to complete at this point. Your rank is based on your score (avoid taking damage and build a stylish combo), time taken and collectible completion (which should already be 100 per cent, thus helping your final rank). Only SSS rankings on Nephilim will count, however, so you'll need to play through from start to finish.



SOUL SACRIFICE

PLATFORM: PS Vita **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5

■ **THE TROPHIES HERE** are an unimaginative bunch. Most will unlock as part of your playthrough, while others will require a fair chunk of grinding. There are only a handful of tricky Trophies, but most of them can be unlocked towards the end of the game – or after having levelled up considerably.

'Boundless Strength', for example, will unlock after earning more than 450 points in a single level. It might seem challenging, but once you've got the game mastered – and a number of levels under your belt – you'll be able to smash this without trying. Finish the stage quickly and without taking damage and you'll get 250 points for that alone.

'Light-footed Sorcerer' requires you to kill an archfiend with just one offering (spell) equipped.

This is best completed on the Chapter Three Jack-o-Lantern fight, since he is the weakest boss. Unequip all items and then equip a strong Frost offering; simply use just this to kill the monster and the Trophy is yours – there are offering renewal spots scattered throughout the level. Most other Trophies follow similar rules that can be easily deduced, but 'Sorrow of Solitude' requires you to tease Librom in three ways: in the cage, tap Librom to make him fall over, tap him from the rear touch panel and then swipe across him.



BLAZBLUE: CONTINUUM SHIFT EXTEND

PLATFORM: PS VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

■ **FIRST OFF, IT'S** worth having played a fighting game or two before if you're hoping to rinse BlazBlue of its Trophies. It's not a particularly difficult bunch of accolades, but it is a fairly technical fighter by all accounts and putting that into practice might not be easy for inexperienced gamers.

There are a few online Trophies that might be worth roping a friend in for; the online community for this will likely only be diehard evangelists by now. You'll need to play through the Arcade Mode, but that won't be the focus of your time – instead it'll be in Abyss Mode where you'll need to find the collectibles, not to forget the Challenge Mode and Gallery Trophies. The items you receive in Abyss Mode are random, so this is a game of luck when it comes to Trophies. Additionally there are a large number of Trophies devoted to character-specific actions – these aren't hard to figure out, but they might be tough to execute, so consider playing against a second 'player' by playing a private game with a friend.



BORDERLANDS 2

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5

■ **THE PLATINUM FOR** *Borderlands 2* is all about the grind. Not only will you need to make it to level 50 (part-way through your second playthrough) but you'll also need to tick off a long list of challenges and side missions. For the most part you'll just need to play the game as you would normally, since you'll be able to grind anything you've missed post-game anyway. While playing through for the first time, however, keep an eye on the Badass Ranks screen, which will give you a long list of mini-objectives to aim for. These can be done at any time, but it's worth knowing what you need to work on (rocket splash damage and close-range shotgun kills, for example) so you don't have to spend too long grinding away at the end. Additionally, try to find and complete all side missions whenever you can, though these can also be done once you've finished the main game.

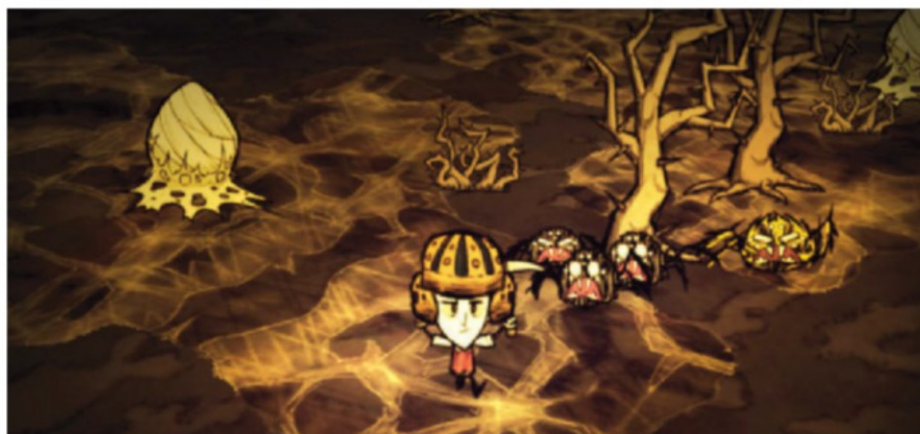
A few Trophies to remember while playing are 'Decked Out', 'Tribute To A Vault Hunter' and 'What does it mean?'. 'Decked Out' requires wearing a purple rarity item in every slot, so store all those purples in your vault so you can cobble together an entirely purple outfit. 'Tribute To A Vault Hunter' requires speaking to Michael Mamaril (short brown-hair, glasses, red jacket) in Sanctuary. He spawns rarely, so make sure you search for him throughout the town whenever you return there. When you do, you'll get a weapon from him. Lastly is 'What does it mean?', which requires finding a small camp north-west of the Hyperion base in The Highlands. At the camp, Handsome Jack will start talking; look over the ridge to see the double rainbow and unlock this Trophy.



DON'T STARVE

PLATFORM: PS4 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

■ **SADLY, DON'T STARVE** doesn't have a Platinum, but don't let that stop you from playing it. The Trophies that are here aren't especially challenging, although there is a bit of luck and grinding involved. The Bronzes are associated with unlocking each of the characters, which you'll get for surviving a certain amount of days in total – that'll take practice more than anything else. Wes, however, can only be unlocked by finding him in Adventure Mode, while Maxwell is unlocked after completing this specialised campaign. After that, it's just the Accomplishrine, an item you can build once you have acquired four gears, a Science Machine and an Alchemy Machine. To unlock the Gold Trophy '...and despair!' you'll need to use this item 725 times, which can be done in one (long) sitting or cumulatively over your game time.



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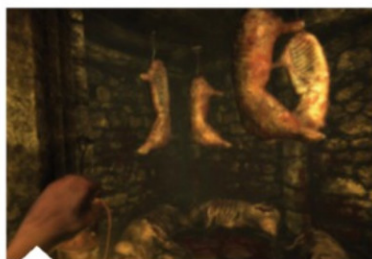
The world of Twitch and live streaming is now open to PlayStation 4 owners worldwide. But with millions of live streamers already out there, who should you be following?



SYNDICATE

Professional Call Of Duty player

YOU'LL HAVE PROBABLY heard of Syndicate, the Brit who made his name through *Call Of Duty* videos while talking about anything and everything that comes to mind. He never actually seems to shut up but his enthusiasm is part of his appeal – he's not the best *Call Of Duty* player you'll ever see but no-one else manages to keep chatting away like he does and that's what has powered him to become one of the biggest names in gaming.



MARKIPLIER

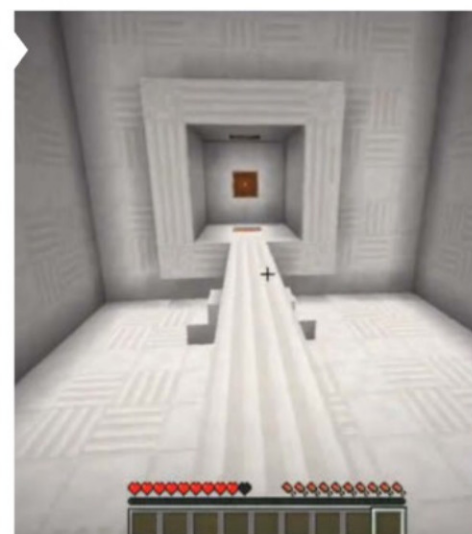
King of random PC indie games

THERE ARE LOTS of weird PC games out there, some of which cross over the PC borders to fabled PlayStation lands (*Don't Starve*, *Terraria*, *Spelunky*, *Stealth Inc*) and some which don't. If you want to know which future PC indie game to pledge allegiance to as you start spamming Yoshida's Twitter demanding that it's brought to PS4, watch Markiplier. He plays a lot of oddball PC indie games and is entertaining while doing so.

CAPTAINSPARKLEZ

The alpha Minecraft personality

IF THERE'S ONE thing Twitch doesn't need any more of, besides people spamming the kappa face, it's people playing *Minecraft*. Seriously. Every other person on Twitch plays *Minecraft* while trying to keep a flowing stream of comedy going and it's usually embarrassing, as they display the improvisational skills of a drunk teenager being asked by their parents if they had been drinking. Captain Sparklez is the best of a large bunch, though.



CRYAOTIC

Horror gaming specialist

DO HORROR GAMES work on Twitch, when you're watching someone else prodding at the dark corners and catapulting backwards off their chair when something evil pops up? Watch Cryaotic and see. All he plays are horror games, from the big-name titles to the weird indie hits. He does commit the cardinal sin of reading all the text out loud but he doesn't force a 'wacky' personality on his viewers. He also dabbles in console games from time to time.



GAMEGRUMPS

Anything and everything



MOST GAMING PERSONALITIES

pick a niche and stick to it. Take us: we'd pick *Virtua Fighter* and play that for months until our fingers bleed into stumps and wonder why we've only gained three followers in that entire time. But GameGrumps plays *everything* – from *The Legend Of Zelda: Wind Waker HD* to *Hello Kitty Seasons*, the one thing you'll always get from GameGrumps is variety.



DARKSYDEPHIL

Whiny Street Fighter player



YOU MIGHT WONDER why the combination of someone who 1) is clearly bad at *Street Fighter* and 2) is possibly the whiniest man to have ever fallen out of a womb has become so popular, but look at Twitch chat. It's like the derpy citizens of YouTube have gathered to have a conversation, and if there's one thing that type of person enjoys, it's laughing at the failure of others. DarksydePhil loses at *Street Fighter* a lot, and whines about it a lot.

UBERHAXORNOVA

He shouts and swears a lot



SOME YOUTUBE PERSONALITIES

have risen to the top of the pile by simply being bigger than anyone else, and by that we mean they've employed the same manner we often do to win arguments – by shouting and swearing. If that appeals to you, UberHaxorNova does specialise in PC games but he also dips into console games from time to time, *GTA V* being the one he's focussed on most. He's also gotten stuck into *The Walking Dead* – look out for his playthroughs.



AVOIDINGTHEPUDDLE

The fighting games channel



THIS IS THE Twitch channel run by top *Tekken* player Aris, and not only does he stream a multitude of fighting games – from various *Tekkens* through to *SoulCalibur II HD* and the like (often featuring several other top players) – but his extensive years of commenting on tournaments means he's naturally good at talking and entertaining his audience while he's playing. If you want to see high-level fighting games outside of Evo, AvoidingThePuddle is the channel you should keep an eye on.

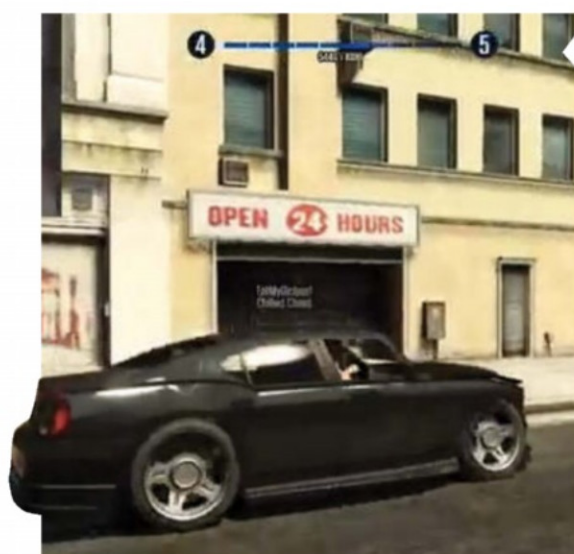


SEANANNERS

Comedy and GTA V



A LOT OF live streamers try to be funny but can't do it. SeaNanners has come closer than most, as he plays with a group of friends that makes everything that much better. His *GTA V* videos have been the best example of this but the fact that he has a friend who can do perfect Morgan Freeman impressions also helps to make his playthroughs of various games all the funnier. We shouldn't have to explain why. We're still looking for someone who can do perfect Arnie impressions to play *Two Worlds* with.

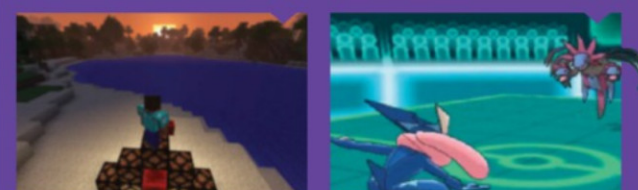


NOTMUNCHINGORANGE

Always streaming



HE'S KNOWN FOR streaming *Minecraft* (again) and Nintendo games like *Super Mario 3D World* and *Pokémon X & Y* but the point is that he's always streaming. And while the PS4 Twitchers fight amongst themselves, at least you know you're guaranteed to see some streaming action from him.



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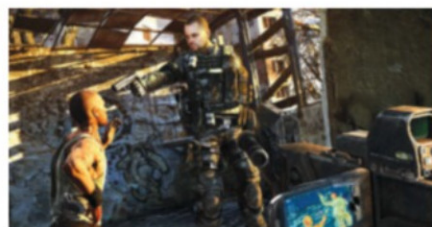
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HOPE YOU AREN'T AFRAID OF THE DARK...



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OUTLAST



February's free PS Plus game is first-person pants-poopers *Outlast*, and luckily for you lot, watching people's reactions to horror games is almost as much fun as playing them yourselves. We are right hard bastards though, so there's no way in hell you'll catch us screaming... right?



PLANETSIDE 2



We don't know when *PlanetSide 2* is coming to PS4, but it's been out on PC for a while now. We've got a pretty swanky PC in the office so we're gonna stream some so you lot know what to expect. We'll probably get killed a lot, and that's clearly worth a watch. Our new regular slot is Wednesdays at 4pm GMT – see you there!

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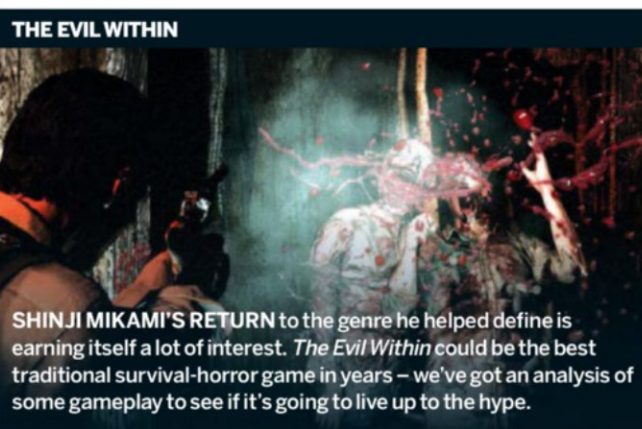
SUPER MOTHERLOAD

ONE OF THE overlooked PS4 launch titles, we've managed to get a little addicted to *Super Motherload*, thanks to the fact that it's kind of like *Mr Driller*.



JUST DANCE JUST DOESN'T WORK

WE AREN'T THE dancing types here at *Play*, but because we are right good at our jobs we put our pride to the side in an attempt to play some *Just Dance*.



THE EVIL WITHIN

SHINJI MIKAMI'S RETURN to the genre he helped define is earning itself a lot of interest. *The Evil Within* could be the best traditional survival-horror game in years – we've got an analysis of some gameplay to see if it's going to live up to the hype.

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THE NEW NAME FOR **XBOX** 360 MAGAZINE

XONE

THE FUTURE OF XBOX ONE
TITANFALL

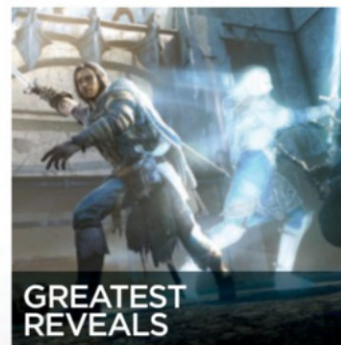
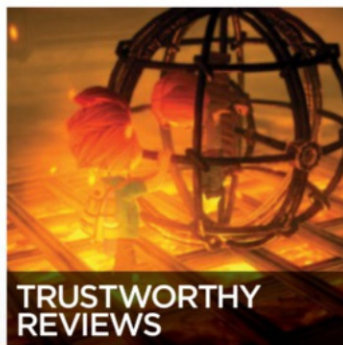
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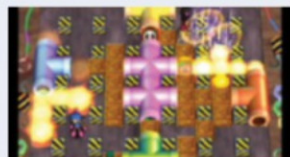


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PLAY+ PLUS PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS GAMES WE ARE AMAZING AT...



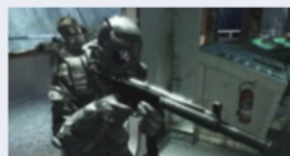
top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 Bomberman Generations
- 2 Guitar Hero III: Warriors Of Rock
- 3 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- 4 Super Monkey Ball
- 5 Micro Machines 2



top five EDEN FRANKHAM

- 1 Super Meat Boy
- 2 Battlefield: Bad Company 2
- 3 Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast
- 4 Half-Life 2: Deathmatch
- 5 Counter Strike 1.6



top five STEVE HOLMES

- 1 Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare
- 2 Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty
- 3 FIFA 11
- 4 Trials Evolution
- 5 Need For Speed: Underground 2



top five SAM SMITH

- 1 Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3
- 2 Dark Souls
- 3 Mega Man X
- 4 Devil May Cry 3
- 5 Contra III

PS4 LISTING

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Battlefield 4	238	80%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Knack	238	55%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
Resogun	238	91%



An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, *Resogun* is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.

Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
War Thunder	239	80%

PS3 LISTING

007 Legends	225	44%
1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Army	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	70%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%



Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent *Arkham Asylum* was a serious contender for game of the year.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Skechter	201	85%
Beowulf	161	61%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode 1	188	65%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%



Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.


The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	188	93%
Brink	206	67%
Brother: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	199	71%
Cresent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubix HD	207	76%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	164	53%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
Digger HD	186	52%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Gran Turismo 6 (PS3)	86%
War Thunder (PS4)	80%
Tearaway (Vita)	80%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match (PS3)	70%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
 DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Droplitz	184	91%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeons & Dragons: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	233	51%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
Elefunk	170	45%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Euforia	212	85%
Everybody's Golf 5	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Explodemon	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2010	197	86%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fata.I Inertia EX	168	65%
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	236	90%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
Fuse	232	73%
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Geon	175	71%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
 With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, Ascension is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.		
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grand Theft Auto V	236	97%
 Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece; the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%
Grid 2	232	79%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guardians Of Middle-Earth	227	71%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperbolloid HD	188	70%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Inversion	220	49%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	206	91%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In The Shadows	173	69%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%

*denotes import review

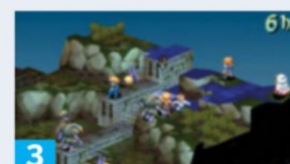
TOP TEN JRPGS



1 **Persona 4 Golden**



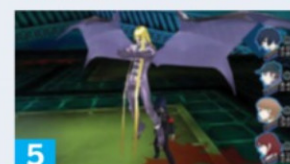
2 **Final Fantasy VII**



3 **Final Fantasy Tactics: The War Of The Lions**



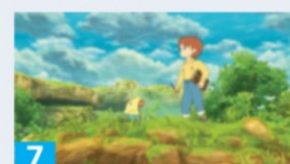
4 **Valkyria Chronicles**



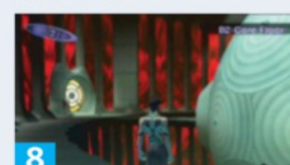
5 **Persona 3 Portable**



6 **Final Fantasy VI**



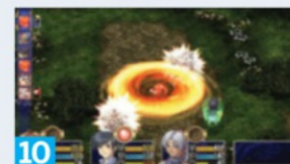
7 **Ni No Kuni**



8 **Shin Megami Tensei III: Nocturne**



9 **Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together**



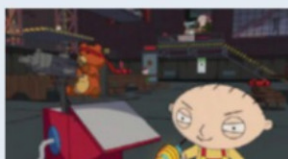
10 **The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky**

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU HATE...



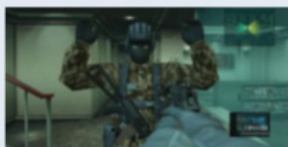
DRAGONS PLAY: SKYRIM

Skyrim is a game in which you will kill many, many dragons. To begin with they pose a huge challenge, but as you level up and gain new items, you'll be cutting them down left and right with nary a care. Someone call PETA!



YOURSELF PLAY: FAMILY GUY: BACK TO THE MULTIVERSE

You are worthless, and you deserve punishment. What better way to inflict pain upon yourself than by playing this awful, unfunny game of a series that has lasted far longer than it ever should have done?



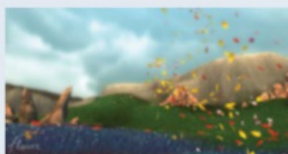
COHERENT STORYTELLING PLAY: METAL GEAR SOLID HD COLLECTION

We love *Metal Gear Solid* more than anyone, but it's pretty obvious that mad genius Hideo Kojima isn't one for planning ahead. *MGS2* in particular... erm, what?





CHILDREN PLAY: LIMBO


Limbo is a great game, fun to play and emotionally affecting... but the young boy you play as can meet his gory demise in myriad ways if you aren't careful. Why on earth would you enjoy that, you sick freak?





VIOLENCE PLAY: FLOWER

The antithesis of modern, violent videogames, *Flower* is a lovely, relaxing trip through beautiful scenery with no explosions in sight. Sounds kind of boring, actually. Where are the guns?

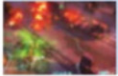
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Magic The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	208	70%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
 <i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	202	51%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 10/11	204	64%
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	173	60%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naïf'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
 <i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
NiGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numbblast	183	60%
Okami HD	225	90%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Pain	183	69%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	235	79%
Peggle	189	94%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
 Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play.		
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Polar Panic	190	65%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	67%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	236	70%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen" Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	195	80%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Smash Cars	184	50%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Soldner-X-2: Final Prototypes	195	70%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	230	79%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Supersonic: Acrobatic Rocket Powered Battle Cars	177	65%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
 When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%
 <i>The Walking Dead</i> should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium.		
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TMNT: Turtles in Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Topotai: Spinning Through Worlds	183	61%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Home	162	31%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trial Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrent Story	189	82%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vandel Hearts: Flames of Judgement	192	87%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	195	65%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	224	85%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ballite Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010	185	77%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE 12	212	50%
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
 Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: <i>XCOM</i> is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yar's Rev	206	57%
Zak Zero	215	73%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	182	78%

PS VITA LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	233	85%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumioni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	239	80%
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT (have they been playing?)

Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn

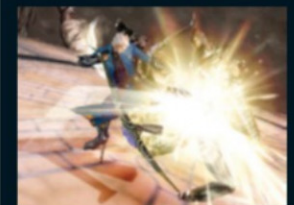
WHY (was it chosen?)

I just can't seem to stop...

LUKE ALBIGÉS

I'VE BEEN TRYING to play other games.

I really have. But whenever I fire up the PS3, I seem to end up heading back to Eorzea instead of doing anything else. Not that I'm complaining, mind – I properly love *A Realm Reborn* and can't wait to let my characters loose on the beautiful PS4 version later in the year. I'll be ready, too. With my Warrior job maxed out (thanks for the buffs, Square!) and Miner getting there (needs me some of those fancy new treasure maps, see), I'll be able to hit the ground running. The 2.1 update added loads of great new content, so it'll be interesting to see how the game evolves this year.



WHAT (have they been playing?)

Devil May Cry 3 HD

WHY (was it chosen?)

Because it's one of the best action games ever

SAM SMITH

I KNOW, I'VE got a fancy new PS4 and I'm

spending my time playing a high-res version of a PS2 game. What can I say? *Devil May Cry 3* is a gift that keeps on giving, even years after it was once new. Getting the Platinum is practically impossible, but... maybe... just maybe...

EVERY GAME. EVERY FORMAT. ONE CHOICE

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FIRST WITH THE BIGGEST GAMES

■ GTA V ■ Titanfall ■ Pokémon X & Y ■ Dragon Age: Inquisition

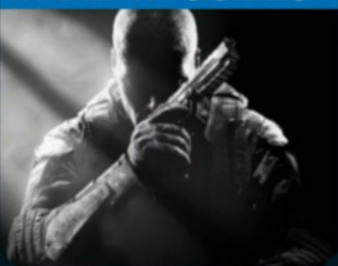
FIRST REVIEWS



BREAKING NEWS



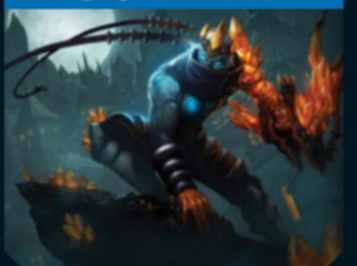
IN-DEPTH GUIDES



BIG INTERVIEWS



MMO CHANNEL



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METAL GEAR SOLID V: GROUND ZEROES

SNAKE SNEAKS ONTO PS4 AT LAST

PLAY.

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www.imagine-publishing.co.uk
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Cover image

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13-Issue subscription UK £51.90 / Europe £70 / ROW £80

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Printed by Wyndeham Heron, The Bentall Complex,
Colchester Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4NW
Distributed in the UK and Eire by Seymour Distribution, 2
East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
☎ 0207 429 4000

Distributed in Australia by Gordon and Gotch, Equinox Centre,
18 Rodborough Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086
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Distributed in the Rest of the World by Marketforce, Blue Fin
Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU
☎ 0203 148 8105

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ISSN 1358-9474

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Jan-Dec 2012

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